







# CONDUCT IS FATE.

“ We are in the world like men playing at Tables; the Chance is not in our own power, but the Playing it is.”

JEREMY TAYLOR.

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# CONDUCT IS FATE.



## CHAPTER I.

Why did she love him? curious fool, be still:—  
Is human love the growth of human will?

BYRON.

WHEN Bertha de Chanci first left her home to elope with her present husband, they resided some months in Lyons. While there, the Comte D'Egmont told his wife that it was of consequence to his very existence they should remain concealed, and Bertha, rigidly adhering to her husband's commands, had ample leisure for reflection.

The Comtesse D'Egmont passed her time in complete loneliness, for her husband was seldom with her, and the few persons with whom

he occasionally associated were not in mind or manners such as could form any society for her. To a retired life she had been accustomed, but it was the retirement of her own romantic country Switzerland; and the loneliness of a great and populous city is a state of soulless solitude, which those only who have had the misfortune to feel can duly know how to commiserate. During some weeks of their residence at Lyons, Bertha had seldom breathed the fresh air; for D'Egmont rarely permitted her to walk out, and, when he did, it was only when the obscurity of evening concealed her.

Insensibly her health began to suffer from this confinement, and her spirits sunk under the change of existence. She, who had lived upon that liberty of exercise and of thought, alike salutary to mental and physical well being, found herself shut up in a narrow street, the sun pouring but a scanty beam at noon-day; and, instead of beholding the moon diffusing its holy placid influence, seeing, only to regret, it reflected on the high walls of the adjacent houses.

To those who have not a genuine love of nature these circumstances must appear trifling and ridiculous, when dwelt upon as influencing happiness; but by those who, from early associations and habits, have been accustomed to derive pleasure and reflection from scenes of nature, it will be felt and understood how very painfully their privation affects the mind.

But, although the Comtesse D'Egmont had, in the youthful romance of an ardent and enthusiastic nature, committed an error, from which there was no retreating, by her hasty and clandestine marriage, she was not one of those futile characters who have not strength of mind to endure the evils they bring upon themselves. She soon discovered that she had bartered happiness for a shadow of romantic felicity, but she strove to redeem that folly, and not sink entirely beneath its degrading consequences.

The Comte D'Egmont had married partly from love—or what he called love—partly from interest, and was mistaken in both. In short, they were mutually disappointed. This dis-

covery afforded a melancholy prospect, for futurity, but one of so common a kind, that it seldom excites sympathy, and never occasions surprise. Yet these two persons, each of them replete with faults, were not without many virtues; and Comte D'Egmont, although a man of violent passions, and stormy uncontrolled temper, making himself, and those who depended upon him, wretched, was, nevertheless, brave, generous, and capable of attachment; but the tissue of his character was so very unequal, that less brilliant colours would have rendered the stains less obtrusively offensive.

Bertr. strove to hide those painful feelings which the discovery of her husband's character occasioned her, but all power of entertainment and of social converse unavoidably fails, when there is any secret barrier placed against that free and reciprocal communication of thought, which is the only pure source of unsatiating delight.

D'Egmont, dissatisfied with the change he perceived in his wife, of which he was himself the sole cause, sought vainly in her society for

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that flow of spirits—that elasticity, of unrepres-  
sed fancy, which imparts brightness to others.  
Thus disappointed in his expectations, D'Eg-  
mont's manners became daily more careless,  
and frequently degenerated into a coarseness,  
which, in despite of duty and attachment on  
the part of his wife, cooled the ardour of her  
love, and daily robbed it of that gloss of feeling  
so exquisitely beautiful, and so rarely lasting.  
Wholly unaccustomed to derive entertainment  
in tranquil or studious occupation, if D'Egmont  
failed to find amusement abroad, he returned  
with an expectation (in some degree just, in-  
deed) that he should find entertainment at  
home; but, with the best intentions, the power  
of entertaining others is not always dependent  
on the will;—the inspiration of delight must be  
reciprocal—the interchange constant, although  
unmarked by effort. Unfortunately this soon  
ceased to be the case; they mutually felt there  
could be no barter of delight between them; and  
yet D'Egmont expected—nay, demanded as a  
right—that very charm whose essence consists

in being voluntary, and of which he himself destroyed the source.

In this temper D'Egmont remained sometimes for hours, listless, and lounging about their apartment. When Bertha attempted to read or employ herself in any way, he would frown, and show evident symptoms of displeasure,—say he would not obtrude upon her studies, and, sneering, leave her abruptly; at other times he would turn into ridicule what he termed the pretension of all fools to appear something for which they were not designed. He exemplified this axiom by observing, that women like to pursue their studies in company, and that they always choose the moment of their husband's presence for the indulgence of their literary tastes.

To be talked *at*, is of all modes of tormenting, perhaps, the most efficacious. Bertha was not invulnerable to the sting, but she had sufficient command over her temper to reply quietly; and one day, she said, in answer to these tauntings, “If it is not agreeable to you that I should read, I will vary my employment. Once you loved music;—shall I sing to you? I

would have done so before, but —” She did not finish what she was about to utter, for her heart swelled high, and she wished to repress all emotion which might excite her own feelings, without soothing those of her husband. She began to sing, but not daring to trust her voice to any expression, lest its own intonations should give her back too forcibly the sensations she found it almost impossible to repress,—she sang monotonously, and the notes died away imperfectly ere they found utterance. She looked up timidly, conscious of her failure, and beheld D’Egmont in a fit of passion that deprived her almost of her senses. “What have I done?” she said, rising and attempting to take his hand, “Tell me, I conjure you, what I have done to displease, and what I could do to please you; it is my sole wish, my sole duty now.”—Again she hesitated. “Now, Madam,” he repeated tauntingly, “what do you mean by *now*, that you regret *it is your duty*?” This appeal to truth for a moment made Bertha silent. She could bend her conduct to another’s will; but never could bend the dictates of her mind to



falsehood, or even to disguise. "Speak, Madam, I command you ! Do you regret that I have that right."—"At this moment, I do, certainly," replied Bertha, in a low yet steady voice, "but it depends upon you to decide, whether I am to continue to do so or not."

The calm determination with which she spoke, brought on a scene which Bertha endured only with the passive tranquillity of despair. These storms of ungoverned passion were wholly strange to her ; no words but of kindness, kindness even in reproof, had ever met her ears. She gazed at him with a mingled feeling of pity and contempt ; but when, with increasing fury, he poured forth volleys of abuse, and cursed the hour he had married, astonishment gave place to grief ; she thought she was under the impression of some painful dream, and that, waking, she should lose the sense of anguish. Suddenly a knock was heard at the door, and D'Egmont's looks and manner changed with the rapidity of lightning. A person entered the room, whom he addressed by the name of Alexis, and accosted with the kindest endearments

of friendship ; then turning to his wife, he said, Bertha, here is my best friend ; receive him with all your grace, and all your smiles." What a moment to call for smiles. The suddenness of the appeal, however, had, in some degree, the desired effect. With a convulsive sob, she repressed the starting tears, and endeavoured to call forth a smile, while she made some awkward apology for the confusion of her appearance. " Never," said D'Egmont rapturously, " can she be ashamed of being seen ; at least she never ought, for she is an angel. When you are acquainted with her, Alexis, you will think so." He uttered the latter words in a tone of tender earnestness, that again melted Bertha for a moment to soft emotion. How these words exhilarated,—how they revived her ! Hope returned ; she looked upon past ill-temper, as past for ever, and felt the joyous feeling, that, while conscious of deserving happiness, it could not be wholly withdrawn.

This friend of D'Egmont's, Alexis de Beaumont, was a grave quiet-mannered man, whose observing eye did not the less remark every

glance and motion of others, from being tranquil in its mode of observation. He spoke little, but that little evinced much accuracy of perception, and the lucid distinctness of plain good sense, which, if it does not light up, does not mislead the imagination.

Monsieur de Beaumont became a frequent visitor, and in his society D'Egmont resumed the dignity and charm with which he knew at times so well to invest himself. He frequently pressed his wife to avail herself of Monsieur de Beaumont's offered protection, and desired her to take her accustomed walks, and no longer immure herself within the walls of her apartment. Bertha, delighted with the permission, and pleased to bask in the temporary sunshine of her husband's good humour, found a pleasure, though not unmixed with melancholy, in tracing the outline of Mont Blanc in the distant horizon, from the walk of poplars which border the Rhope. The flatness of the surrounding country was particularly distasteful to her eye; and she indulged in drawing a contrast between its rich, but palling monotony, and the magnificent

scenery of her own sublime mountains. There was bitterness in the result of the comparison; but where is the human heart that has no gall, and that never delights in discontent?

Upon the whole, however, Bertha's existence had received a new and animating tone since the arrival of Monsieur de Beaumont. In early youth, when hope itself is young, the spirits are bent, not broken. The slightest encouragement restores their vigour, and there is an elasticity in the mind's enjoyment, which, after temporary checks, shoots forth with redoubled strength.

Bertha felt this renovation of joy, and she was grateful towards Monsieur de Beaumont, as being the cause of her restoration to happiness.

When D'Egmont conversed with his friend, his conversation took a wider range, a loftier tone, than it had done for some months past. While living only with persons of inferior intellect or interested views, all the mean and bad qualities of his mind had been drawn forth; now these were again concealed, and the brighter parts of his character appeared.

Politics was a favourite topic of Comte D'Eg-

mont's, and Bertha listened to her husband with pleasure; a pleasure enhanced by surprise at deriving it from an unexpected source. In the happy ignorance of her hitherto secluded and innocent life, it had never come within the circle of her consideration to think, that politics could affect the happiness of individuals. She considered the subject, if, indeed, she could have ever been said to consider it, as an abstract speculation, which occupied kings and ministers and old men, but never before brought it home to herself, as affecting any thing dear to her.

Formed to take interest in all which excited the exercise of thought, she eagerly entered upon every new avenue of intellectual enjoyment, and in measure as she felt, although she did not allow the feeling to herself, that happiness had failed her, or, to speak more correctly, that she had failed of finding happiness, in that great object of a woman's life, married felicity, so did she with keener search advert to other means of gratification, seeking in interests foreign to the heart, for that which she would fain have derived from the heart alone. In such at-

tempts, the mind gains in strength, what it loses in bliss. Would any woman from choice make the sad exchange?

For some time after Monsieur de Beaumont's arrival at Lyons, no domestic storms interrupted the tranquillity of Bertha. D'Egmont had tacitly confessed himself in the wrong, and from that moment she had ceased to think he had ever been so. The woman who sees her husband at her feet, who hears him commend her temper, in contradistinction to his own, does not merit that happiness, if she receives it not with gratitude, with transport. Yet there is a recurrence of suffering, of unjust suffering, beyond which even this gentleness of soul cannot extend. D'Egmont became more and more engrossed with Monsieur de Beaumont; either he was closetted with him in conference, to which Bertha was not admitted, or they were absent together. She was left, it is true, in undisturbed tranquillity to prosecute her own occupations, and follow the bent of her own tastes,—but she was left.

At first, the contrast of this total calm after

storm, was grateful to her harassed spirits—but the human mind requires an alternation of rest and labour to its healthful state; and, after a time, she found herself frequently reading over the same page, drawling over the same song, and working, till her hands dropt down listless, and her eyes gazed on vacancy—"Is it ever thus?" she sometimes asked herself:—"Do we, in the day of trouble, sigh for the day of rest, and when the rest cometh do we loath it in its turn? This then is existence: how different from what I had once figured it to myself!"

Bertha had not undergone that apprenticeship to life which breaks the elastic spirits, in order to render them more subservient to the purposes of existence. On entering the world, our first prospects are usually dazzling. We lend to every object the charm which is in ourselves. But this, alas! is of short duration—then comes the gloom of bitter disappointment. On first discovering our fallacious hopes, we nauseate all we loved before; each little blemish in our joys is magnified to loathsome blotches which infect the air we breathe,—yet still we

breathe it; and after another lapse of time the keenness of this pang likewise passeth away. Is it that a consciousness of our own imperfections reduces us in some measure to the level of those around, and reconciles man to his fate; or is it that we grow callous, and owe our philosophy to indifference?



## CHAPTER II.

“Ceux qui s'exercent à controller les actions humaines, ne se trouvent en aucune partie si empêchez qu'à les compresser et mettre à même lustre ; car elles se contre disent communément de si étrange façon qu'il semble impossible qu'elles soient parties de même Boutique.”

MONTAIGNE.

BERTHA was not allowed to remain long in the suspension between good and evil, in which she had lately existed. D'Egmont announced to her his resolution of setting off immediately for Paris. She expressed the pleasure she felt at the thought of moving to a new scene, and one which she had painted as abounding with every object to interest the mind or engage the fancy. But D'Egmont quickly dissipated this gay illusion of her imagination, by one of those dark frowns which so often obscured to her

every beam of gaiety, rendering the gifts of nature and of youth vain and profitless. Bertha troubled inwardly at her husband's gloomy countenance, and, dreading a relapse into those storms which had so lately embittered her life, she endeavoured to conceal the despair she felt, and addressed herself as calmly as she could to Monsieur de Beaumont. She asked some questions, to which, at the time, she attached little interest, relative to their route to Paris. • Monsieur de Beaumont, who always treated every subject with a certain degree of gravity and consequence, commenced a reply to Bertha in a serious and somewhat prolix manner, but contrived to throw interest and information into his discourse, so as to engage her attention, and draw it off from her own sad situation. “Where are your maps, D'Egmont?” asked Monsieur de Beaumont. “I know not;” was the short ungracious reply, but made in that well known terrific undertone which struck dismay to the heart of Bertha. “How shall I ever please him,” said she to herself, “and how know to avoid giving him offence?”

During her silence Monsieur de Beaumont rose to look for the maps he had inquired for. She dreaded being left alone with her husband at that moment, and involuntarily held out her hand to detain him, as he left the room. Then came over Bertha that glow of terror which often gives to innocence the hues of guilt ; and the consciousness that her fears were seen, and might be attributed to some wrong emotion, totally overcame her. She hung her head—she played with the ringlets of her hair—but her attempt at composure was ineffectual. D'Egmont made a few paces to approach nearer to her—then stopped, gazing at her intently for some time, with fixed rage and fury in his countenance—then burst forth in fits of frenzied passion. Struck with horror she remained in speechless agony immovable, her hands only raised and clasped together in attitude of supplication. The door opened—Monsieur de Beaumont re-appeared, laden with maps and books. Instantaneously, as if it had been by magic, D'Egmont's rage was hushed. His countenance displayed no trace which was dis-

cernible to any eye, save Bertha's, of that fury which the instant before had distorted his features, and he affected to be absorbed in the book, which he again took up.

De Beaumont began, in his usual cool and orderly manner, to arrange his maps, and explain what he wished to say, when, looking up in Bertha's face, he beheld her pale as death. "D'Egmont," he cried, "come instantly to the Comtesse; she is ready to faint." "Oh," rejoined the former, "let her alone, she is only giving herself a few airs—a little affected sensibility, that is all." This was the first affront Bertha had ever received from her husband before any third person. Thrown off her guard completely—mastered by her feelings—she felt the suffocation which precedes tears, and soon these came to her relief, as she sobbed in all the convulsion of bitter grief. De Beaumont paced the apartment, saying, "This is terrible—what can be done?" and, at length, as he could do nothing, he left the room. "So, Madam," said D'Egmont, "your lover has left you to recover from these interesting hysterics." "My

lover !” repeated Bertha, recovering composure in a moment from indignation. “ D’Egmont, what can you mean ? what dreadful crime dare you impute to me ?” He then, in language befitting a maniac, charged his wife with indulging a passion for Monsieur de Beaumont. To Bertha, whose ears were too unsullied by stories of crime, not to start with unfeigned horror from the imputation, this accusation seemed so monstrous, and at the same time so ridiculous, considering the circumstances in which she had made De Beaumont’s acquaintance, that she felt that sensation of mingled laughter with horror, which seems only one step removed from insanity.

After all her protestations, all her honest indignation had proved of no avail, a mere matter of chance turned the tide of D’Egmont’s displeasure. A flower which he had worn fell to the ground ; Bertha lifted it almost unconsciously and placed it in her breast. He was suddenly touched at this, and falling on his knees, caught her in his arms, with rapturous expressions of love and adoration, vaunting her per-

fections,—condemning himself. But the same kind of scene had too often occurred ; the bow, too often bent and relaxed, was broken ; that fine spring of the heart's fresh feelings no longer rebounded at the call of pleasure. Weary and worn out with strife, Bertha was glad to take refuge in peace ; but she received passively those caresses—those professions—which she once thought never could have been received but with rapture. The sad avowal which, for the first time she made herself, that they were no longer so, gave an additional gloom to her harassed feelings ; and she sought, in pretended slumber, for that repose which she feared had left her for ever.

The spring of animation broken, and brooding care at her heart, how could Bertha look happy, or be the thing she was not. The veil had dropped. She beheld in her husband not the creature of her imagination, but a being in whom all the infirmities of human temper reigned unchecked by control, and whose impetuosity alone was displayed, whether it was excited by love or anger. But, strange to tell, on

D'Egmont's own mind, his violence left little or no trace. He suddenly became placid after tremendous ebullitions of fury, and was surprised when Bertha also could not partake the same versatility of sensation.

D'Egmont was frequently mortified at observing the interior conflicts which, in spite of natural cheerfulness, and a constitutional good temper, Bertha did not always conceal. He liked to inflict pain, because that implied power; but his pride was mortified at not being able to command pleasure also when he chose to dress his victim in smiles. To this species of dissatisfaction Bertha did not feel disposed to pay any regard: it arose from a source entirely selfish, and could not call forth any answering sentiment.

In proportion, however, as love died away, she felt that duty more imperiously commanded her to watch over her conduct, and to fulfil this duty was her only study. It was no easy task, — what pleased one hour offended the next; the distant manner, the silence she observed towards Monsieur de Beaumont, were construed into

some unworthy meaning;—and we almost become degraded in our own estimation, when we are living and acting under the impression of being suspected. Sometimes she determined to cast off all restraint, to be her own pure and innocent self, rich in all the gifts of nature, delighting and delighted, not suffering the tyranny of undue authority to deprive her of these self-emanating and varied pleasures with which she had been endowed by Heaven; but this determination endured only for a moment,—it was vain. The slavery was on her mind; she had debased herself by a voluntary acquiescence to it. The fetters were on her imagination, they weighed heavily on her heart, to the extinction of all mental freedom or enjoyment.

It was at this epoch, and with a mind thus subdued, that Bertha arrived at Paris.

One evening after the Comte D'Egmont had been absent all day, he entered his wife's apartment with a wild disordered air, and throwing himself on a seat, exclaimed, "Bertha, we are ruined, and unless you can draw money from Swisserland, I know not to what degrading ex-



tremities we may be reduced. My supplies have unexpectedly failed, of course, this is only a temporary inconvenience, but still it is one against which we must speedily seek to provide." "From Swisserland?" exclaimed Bertha, while anguish wrung her breast. "Alas! you forbade my having any communication with the friends I have left there. How can I write to them, after having offended them as I have done, for money merely—D'Egmont, how can I?" "Offended them?" interrupted the latter, his brows knitting together; "what right have they to be offended? Is it cause of offence that a private obscure individual has united herself to a man of my rank?" "You forget," rejoined his wife meekly, "that my relations, as well as myself, are ignorant of your situation, and there were reports which were not altogether favo——."

Bertha checked the remainder of her speech, adding humbly, "At all events, my clandestine and imprudent marriage, my improper mode of leaving my guardian, affords all my connections too just a plea to condemn any application I might make them."

“ You should have thought of all these things before,” harshly replied D’Egmont. Bertha only sighed, for she felt the truth of the remark.

Since it is the hard lot of woman to be reproached by those most severely, for whose sakes they deserve and incur reproach, will the experience of others, who have stepped before in the path of life, never warn them to shun this danger?

D’Egmont ended the conversation, by commanding his wife to write immediately to Switzerland, and demand a part of her fortune. The latter entreated only to be permitted to address first a letter of penitential kind, to a female cousin. “ You are my wife, Madam, not the Bannet Manvert’s,” was the reply. “ His displeasure does not regulate your conduct now ; mine may affect you, and shall, if you disobey me.” Uttering these words with violence, he shut the door and departed. How bitterly did Bertha then recollect all the sober truths which the two good old ladies who had educated her so often imparted to her then unheeding ear. But the time arrives, sooner or latter, when the wisdom of

those who have preceded us in life rises up in our own path, to pronounce comfort or condemnation. But as D'Egmont said, and said truly, these things should have been considered before. To pass one period of existence, in recalling and regretting what never can be recalled, however regretted in another, is a fatal misapplication of repentance. Bertha determined at least to avoid this error. For the present, then, it concerned her most to provide. Obedience to her husband's will, where it infringed not on other duties, was the first step towards her present comfort, as well as to her obtaining that inward peace which sufficeth to itself. With burning blushes and a heavy heart, she commenced a letter to Swisserland. Excuses she felt were vain—yet it is impossible not to wish to gloss over our faults. Many commencements of letters were written and torn. At length Bertha confined herself to that simple mode of expression which relates facts without striving to adorn them. She said her heart was sad, and in every sentence that sadness pleaded for her. When the letter was finished, she knew that her husband would

wish to peruse it, but a consciousness was at her heart that he would have been displeased at its tenor; she therefore sealed and dispatched it in haste. Yet there was nothing criminal or disgraceful in the page;—why make a mystery? simply because fear got the better of candour. Nor is this fault (for it is one) to be attributed to *individual* character; it arises out of the weakness and waywardness of human nature; for how seldom is it that we have sufficient justice or magnanimity to endure to see ourselves represented in a manner we are conscious is nevertheless true? It is to be regretted, however, that every one has not always the courage to be perfectly sincere and candid. The evils incurred by the contrary mode of conduct are, perhaps, greater than those which would be endured by perfect candour. When Comte D'Egmont returned to Bertha, he seemed to have forgotten the subject of his late ungoverned expressions. He told his wife, with a gay and careless air, that all would go well, and that he intended visiting one of the theatres, desiring her to hasten and dress, in order

to accompany him. At another moment, there was nothing she would have more enjoyed, but, at the present, her eyes red and swollen with weeping—that weeping which is not tears “forgot as soon as shed,” but the bitter burning tears of a self-condemning spirit,—she felt unequal to any scene of mere pleasure, and sought to be excused. Immediately her husband relapsed into anger, and to allay this, Bertha hastened to call forth unwilling smiles, and to prepare to obey his wishes. A few months ago, to attend a scenic representation would have delighted her, for novelty would have enhanced to her the pleasure, but now she found herself in this gay assembly without one joyous sensation. So seldom is it that we receive any pleasure at the exact moment, or in the particular mode which bestows it unalloyed. Some bitter ingredient mingles with the sweet, and when it becomes ours, 'tis sweet no longer.

Bertha did not, however, with sullen gloom, determine not to be amused. On the contrary, she endeavoured to extract entertainment from a representation, which the beauty of scenery and

the charm of music was well calculated to inspire. Scarcely had she begun to taste their influence, when D'Egmont suddenly touched her, and whispered in her ear, "Let us begone directly, there is Carlovitz, by all that is unlucky; and I wish particularly to avoid him." For this person Bertha also felt a repugnance stronger than any actual circumstance with which she was acquainted concerning him could reasonably warrant. She rose, and was hurrying from the box, when a party entering the theatre blocked up the passage; and, to the astonishment of Bertha, and the evident agitation of her husband, they beheld a female who, from different motives, they neither of them could behold with indifference. In Mademoiselle Sophie de Féronce Bertha saw a friend whom she had once dearly loved, and who had betrayed her. In that same Sophie the Comte beheld a being who maintained a powerful sway over his mind—one to whom he partly owed all the misdeeds of his past life, and all the misery of his present existence.

For a moment Sophie de Féronce looked at

them both, as if irresolute how to behave; but soon recovering from her confusion, she came forward at once with ease, and the 'apparent affection of a friend who had been long absent. "Ah!" said she, "is it so? My dear Bertha, (embracing her,) why did you not tell me the truth at first?" then bent forward and whispered in her ear. Turning afterwards to D'Egmont, she addressed him with a torrent of kind expressions, mingling her compliments to him with others to his wife; and so strangely did this once loved Sophie still fascinate her friend, that for a moment she forgot the hollowness of those professions,—the unworthiness of her who uttered them.

If such was the effect this unexpected meeting produced on Bertha, what fatal power did it not obtain on the inflammable heart of her husband.

"Come," said Mademoiselle de Féronce, leaning on D'Egmont's arm, as she had previously done on Bertha's, "you shall positively stay with me the remainder of the evening. Remember, my dear Bertha, your last words to

me were, ‘unchanged, unchanging.’ *I have remembered them,”* said she, with a bitter smile, “let me not see that you wish to forget them.” At this appeal Bertha felt the blood rush like fire through her veins.

How it grates against the feelings to recollect words which we have uttered in the full tide of the heart’s affections, and to hear them repeated when these affections exist no more. It makes some difference, indeed, if the change has not been owing to the mutability of our own sentiments, but merely to the decay common to most attachments. Yet, in either case, this return of sound, which no longer finds an echo in our own breasts, is ever humiliating and painful.

While Bertha felt all that she could not say, Mademoiselle de Féronce continued repeating all that she did not feel. Then turning to some persons by whom she was accompanied, “Allow me to introduce you to—to whom?” said she, in a loud whisper to Comte D’Egmont, “for you do not, I fancy, wish to be known.” D’Egmont coloured,—hesitated; his eye fell beneath the bold gaze of the questioner’s—“To



Madame D'Egmont." "D'Egmont?" repeated Mademoiselle de Féronce in a tone of surprise.

'Oh! be it so;'—and then again placing her lips close to the ear of Bertha, she said, "You see an old friend can be discreet." The former looked at her husband, and caught the reflection of that confusion which varied his cheek in quick alternation from red to pale; while Sophie de Féronce, evidently enjoying their distress, had by this time drawn them back into the box they had just left, dismissed most of her other attendants; and, seating herself between them, addressed herself in an under tone to D'Egmont, leaving Bertha to her own reflections.

"Sophie de Féronce was brilliantly attired, and handsomer even than when Bertha had first seen her at Lausanne. The latter was aware that she captivated her husband by her beauty, her splendid appearance, the independence of her situation; that independence which gives a consciousness of power, and allows the mind its full play, to dazzle, to engage, to enslave,—while the shrinking subdued wife drew a melancholy contrast to this with herself. Her plain attire,

—her face of care,—her unknown state,—unknown even to herself,—her talents and her faculties in subjection to a tyranny that depressed their vigour, however much she strove to rise superior to its blighting effects. And glancing her eye amid the brilliant and apparently happy circle, Bertha heartily wished herself again concealed in the privacy of her chamber, enduring those trials which she had brought upon herself, in secret loneliness,—that very loneliness which she had not many weeks back deplored,—so little do we appreciate the exact degree of our sufferings, till some new pang affords a melancholy standard of comparison.

Bertha's thoughts were suddenly drawn off their sad interests, by the opening of the box-door to admit the portentous figure of Carlovitz. He looked in as if to ascertain if there was room for him. Bertha shuddered involuntarily. Mademoiselle de Féronce had not at first observed him, but suddenly turning round she beheld, and nodding familiarly to him, beckoned him to come in. "What an agreeable unexpected meeting of friends," she added, sitting closer to

D'Egmont, and making room for him between herself and Bertha. The latter shrunk back ; in doing so she appeared to facilitate the arrangement, and D'Egmont frowned upon her with dark and gloomy displeasure ; but Carlovitz made good his way, and squeezed himself into the seat provided for him. " All this is well," cried Sophie de Féronce ; " this is what I have long wished for ;" and, taking a hand of each, she joined them, saying, " There—there is a union of two of the cleverest men in the world."

Bertha beheld this scene with stupified amazement. She saw how repugnant it was to D'Egmont to be thus forced into the appearance of friendly intercourse with a man whom a few moments before he sought to avoid ; and she augured nothing favourable to her happiness from the influence which she saw exercised by a woman she had every reason to mistrust. After a short time had elapsed, during which D'Egmont spoke hurriedly, but with apparent good humour, to Carlovitz, Sophie took up the conversation, and gradually engaged the atten-

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tion of the former exclusively, leaving the latter entirely to Bertha. Carlovitz never spoke much. He gazed intently on Bertha, and with inquisitive looks that asked a thousand impertinent questions. She turned from him in disgust, and he relapsed into total silence. Shortly after the performance ended, and Bertha arose with alacrity, joyful to quit a scene which to her had been productive only of pain. So ended the expectations she had once formed of the delight she should feel on being present at a scenic representation; and so ends most of the expectations we form of all the scenes in which we are either spectators or actors.

Comte D'Egmont gave his arm to Sophie; Carlovitz took that of Bertha. The former declared she would have the pleasure of taking them home; and D'Egmont, without equipage or attendants, was not sorry to accept her offer. The party ascended the carriage, and, being driven to their hotel, Sophie exclaimed against its shabby appearance—vowed they should not live in that part of the town, so unsuited to

them ; and, reiterating her offers of service, declared she would be at their door early the next morning ; and, with a thousand protestation left them to retire for the night.

## CHAPTER III.

How happy is he born or taught  
That serveth not another's will ;  
Whose armour is his honest thought,  
And simple truth his utmost skill.

SIR H. WOTTON.

THE next morning D'Egmont inquired of Bertha, with that tone of subdued anger which ever made her tremble, if she had remembered his command to write to Swisserland ? “ Yes,” she replied. But she hesitated and blushed ; for she did not tell the whole truth. She had written, but not as he had ordered, to ask for money. D'Egmont saw this in her countenance, and, without waiting to have it confirmed by words, he broke forth into a paroxysm of rage, for which there appeared no adequate cause.

When this in some degree subsided, Bertha thought she might address him ; and, with

great gentleness, said, "I disobeyed you for two reasons. In the first place, I thought"— "Thought," rejoined D'Egmont, "what business had you to think? Women and children have only to obey." Galled by this brutal despotism, Bertha's independent mind revolted against such abuse of power; and, with that contempt which reason and the independence of a noble spirit must ever bestow on tyranny, she recovered her self-possession, and told him in few words, that the little fortune she possessed would not be in her power till she attained her twenty-fifth year; and, in the interim, the Bannet de Manvert, her guardian, had the sole direction of it. D'Egmont heard this with impatience. "Why did you not tell me this circumstance before?" he said, starting up and pacing the apartment furiously. "You have deceived me; the consequences be upon your own head." "Deceived you, D'Egmont? No, you cannot think so; if any one has been deceived, it is myself." Bertha felt that this truth ought not to have escaped her. She remained silent, but not so he to whom it was spoken. Torrents of

invective and abuse were poured forth upon her; and, as she felt conscious that she had, in some degree, excited it, she bore it with more than usual meekness.

Mademoiselle de Féronce did not forget her promises. She returned to make good her offers, and went so far as to entreat the Comte and Comtesse D'Egmont to accept apartments in her house. For some time Bertha eluded this attempt to get her into her power; and when she saw that her husband evidently wished her to comply, she ventured to represent to him that Sophie de Féronce was an unfit associate for her, in every point of view, and one whose gay life and expensive mode of living could ill accord with their means or their duties. D'Egmont told her, with great asperity, that he abhorred affectation, and that her pretended love of retirement was nothing else. "Your dress, too, Madam, neglected—your whole appearance changed; what can all this imply but that you are indifferent to my approbation? Once you were sufficiently anxious about your personal appearance, but now, I suppose, be-



cause you are 'my wife, you choose to make yourself as disagreeable as possible."

When Bertha answered these charges she was accused of pertness—when she was silent, of being sullen; she determined, therefore, by passive obedience, to endeavour to conciliate. But the resignation which in woman is virtue, is not that homage of free-will which is the offspring of liberty—the spontaneous impulse of a similarity of wishes and of opinions. Bertha bowed in submission, and ceased to expect any happiness. Her endeavours to regain tranquillity were not ineffectual. In measure as she relinquished the brightness of felicity she reposed in the shade of content.

The Comte and Comtesse D'Egmont were now settled in Mademoiselle de Féronce's hotel. Carlovitz was their constant visitor. Bertha saw little of her husband, but when she did, he was gentle in his manners towards her; and there was a tacit agreement established between them that said, "We do not love any longer, but we are bound by ties we cannot break."

The house of Mademoiselle de Féronce was

one gay scene of blaze and dissipation, though she bore a very equivocal character, and no one knew who she was, or from what source she supported the splendour of her establishment. Still, as the world found it answer to their pleasures to attend her parties and accept her invitations, she enjoyed, to all outward appearance, the countenance of the multitude.

As week after week glided away, Bertha became gradually convinced of what at first she had only feared,—that Sophie de Féronce was undermining the last feeble hold she possessed in her husband's affections. She saw and felt that, from that well known and natural, although disgraceful, quality in the human breast, the more he wronged, and the less she deserved his ill treatment, the more disagreeable she became to him, till at length her presence seemed irksome.

The pride which supported her to suffer in silence was only an additional source of anguish, for it represented to her that she was the victim of she knew not whom—a man who might be plunged in crimes from which she instinctively

shuddered. At these moments, when this thought took possession of her, she determined to press her husband to a disclosure of his real situation, and to leave him rather than be the partner of a guilty—Again she would check herself. Was he not her husband? Was she not rendering *herself* criminal by indulging for a moment a thought that *he* could be so? In every state of trial—in every stage of suffering, Providence mercifully interposes some cordial to revive the fainting spirits—some interval of suspension to enable the sufferer to endure the allotted woe.

Bertha received a letter from her cousin, Esther Manvert; it was written with all the tenderness of affection, and its kindness awoke the sweetest tears she had shed for many a long day, and while these still glistened in her eyes, she hastily ran to communicate her pleasure to her husband; with joyous expression she began to read aloud, till she recollected how little he would participate in her feelings. She stopped, and looked at him. His eyes were fixed on her countenance. “But, come to the point,” he

said, "the money?" It was the last thing Bertha had thought of. "Till I am five and twenty I cannot touch my fortune," again added Bertha; "and if I attempt doing so, having married without my guardian's consent, I forfeit all title to it."—"Then," rejoined D'Egmont, "seek a maintenance where you can, for I have none to give you." Every consideration at that moment seemed indifferent to Bertha. She had found her friend's heart open to her; all else was as it were not,—but with that blessed security, every thing appeared to her serene. "Do not, I entreat you," said Bertha, in reply, "do not give way to despondence. I do not see this matter in the same light in which you view it. In two years time my fortune must be mine. The Banneret is too good to deprive me of it, and in the interim, I will conform to any mode of life you prescribe cheerfully; we will quit this luxurious way of living, its idleness, its vain expence; we will——"—"Fool," cried D'Egmont, in uncontrolled anger, "provoking fool, let me see thee no more." He spurned her from him as she vainly attempted to cling to his arm,

when the door opened, and Monsieur de Beaumont entered. D'Egmont did not (as he was wont on former occasions) recover a semblance of composure, while the situation of Bertha disclosed the secret of their unhappiness. Monsieur de Beaumont stood irresolute whether to retire or advance. During this moment D'Egmont hastily passed him, and left the room.

“ I am afraid you are not well,” said Monsieur de Beaumont. “ No,” she said, “ I am sick at heart.” De Beaumont gazed at her with an expression of deep concern. “ I hope you will speedily recover,” he said, in a voice that implied he did not think what he said ; and adding, “ that he hoped she would command him, if he could be of the slightest service to her,” bade her farewell.

At the same instant Mademoiselle de Féronce entered. “ Ah ! my dear,” said she, accosting Bertha, “ What tragedy scene have you and Monsieur de Beaumont been practising ?”—“ One in real life,” she replied, returning her gaze with calm but mournful look. For a moment Sophie's eyes sunk abashed beneath the in-

fluence of that look ; a slight feeling of remorse, too, passed through her heart, and tinted her features with shame ; but the feeling and the blush died quickly away, and she began rallying Bertha upon the folly of indulging romantic ideas. “ Has D’Egmont not been with you during the last hour ; or has he told you your hair is dishevelled ; or committed any other offence against true love, of the same desperate nature ? ”

Bertha had never yet breathed to mortal ear one word which could sully the character of her husband, and felt, that to complain was beneath the dignity of her own. It was not to Sophie de Féronce that she was to be betrayed into such confidence ; and she answered her provoking taunts by simply replying, That she had a cause of grief which precluded all raillery ; that she was suffering likewise from indisposition ; and requested to be left alone.—“ Oh ! certainly,” rejoined Sophie. “ I would not trouble you longer with my company, but that I am waiting for D’Egmont, and, therefore, you

will give me leave to remain in your apartment till he appears."

There was an effrontery so provoking in Mademoiselle de Féroncé's manner, as well as in her words, that it almost occasioned Bertha to forget herself, and answer angrily; but she commanded the impulse, and assumed a composure she did not feel.

"Come, my dear Bertha," continued the former, approaching and taking her hand; "I know the refinement of your feelings; they are sometimes shocked at the honest sincerity of mine; but in my own way I can be friendly, and, perhaps, when you grow wiser, and that this gloss of sentiment wears off, you will acknowledge, that I am walking quietly upon the earth—as it is fashioned, while you are soaring about in the clouds, from whence you will never descend, without the risk of breaking your bones."

"Sophie," replied Bertha, "your reasoning may be sound, your doctrine salutary; but my sincerity shall equal yours, and I will tell you frankly, I am in no mood to taste either. I

loved you too well once, to love you, but little now. I have no longer one sentiment of esteem or regard for you left, and I should be less miserable if we never met again.”—“ Repeat what you have uttered,” cried Sophie, in a loud and furious tone; “ your desire shall be gratified, but it shall be at your cost.” At this instant D’Egmont entered. • He gazed alternately at his wife, at Sophie. He appeared confounded; then bursting into forced laughter, he exclaimed, “ What an excellent scene for a farce.”—“ But in the mean time I want to speak to you,” said Sophie, and taking his arm, led him away.



## CHAPTER IV.

“ Rien n'est au ton d'une ame active, souffrante et agitée : elle doit vivre sur elle-même.”

THERE are moments in existence when every thing seems alike ; friends cannot comfort, nor foes oppress us. At such times Providence seems to command a suspension of all earthly endeavours ; a resigned state of inaction seems pointed out as our only duty ;—happiest those whose constitutional and mental frame is best adapted to endure this state of quiescent trial.

Bertha sat immoveable as a statue for some time after her husband's departure with Mademoiselle de Féronce, nor was she roused from this torpid reverie till Carlovitz addressed her. This man's appearance had been ever repugnant to her ; his presence was connected with scenes in her past life which she deplored : and the in-

fluence he appeared to have over her present existence was of a nature the more terrific, because it was mysterious. He smiled sneeringly as he accosted her with a familiar and protecting air, saying, "I know you fear me, but I would far sooner inspire you with other sentiments." He approached and took her hand. She withdrew it hastily, and rising to depart, said, "I am not able to converse, you must excuse me;" but he again seized her hand, and with a violence she did not attempt to struggle against, he compelled her to resume her seat. "It is necessary, lady, that I should let you know who are your friends, and who are not; that I should explain some circumstances to you, relative to your own situation, and to D'Egmont's, of which you appear ignorant. If you quietly attend to my words, I will endeavour to soften the pain they will, I fear, necessarily convey; but if you prove unwise, and scorn me, you will only disgrace yourself, and render your misfortunes the talk of the whole world." Bertha grew pale—and Carlo-vitz, perceiving that he had obtained some power over her, continued: "Perhaps," he added in a

softened tone of voice, "you do not believe that I am really your friend; but when I tell you that you have been living entirely at my expence, and that, if it were my pleasure, I could disclose a secret, that would endanger your husband's life; perhaps, when I tell you these things, you will be more disposed to listen to me." Bertha's agony had increased at every word; she wished to disbelieve every fearful image which was exhibited to her view; but a thousand circumstances flashed in rapid succession on her memory, and confirmed their reality. Firmness enough was yet left to her, however, to keep up the semblance of disbelief, and the scorn she felt for the personal character of the informer, gave her courage to assume a composure she had not. She arose, and, with a gesture of haughty impatience, again attempted to leave the room. "Softly," rejoined Carlovitz, detaining her, "where would you go? who would you go to? Your husband, as you call him, is eloped with Mademoiselle Féroncé,—you are completely in my power, without friends or money to assist you. But I love you, and——nay, hear me,—hear

me you must and shall." "Never," cried Bertha, "never!—you wrong him, you traduce him for your own base purposes; if he leaves me,"—a cruel pang shot through her heart as she admitted the possibility,—“if he leaves me,—I am friendless and alone; I may beg or starve; but I can and will resist the tyranny, the wretchedness, the guilt you would impose upon me. I am in a civilized country, I can implore the protection of its laws,—you dare not infringe them;” and she glanced indignantly at the mean, shrinking villain.

Carlovitz, in his turn, was awed, but he affected to laugh, said he would leave her to the protection of those laws she so much relied on—added, that he could not waste his time in arguing with an unreasonable woman, and would leave her till she came to her senses. When Bertha found herself at length alone, she looked round as if she had indeed escaped from shipwreck, but was left on a desert shore to perish. For, if the dreadful tale was true, or true even in part, to whom could she apply, where could she go for redress, for protection? Monsieur de

Beaumont was the only person that occurred to her, and, as her husband's friend, appeared the most eligible one for her to make application to in her distress ; to him, therefore, she determined to address herself ; yet what could she say, how tell him she was a forsaken wife, without betraying her own humiliation and her husband's iniquitous conduct ? After a short conflict with the contending emotions of mortified pride and wounded delicacy, the exigency of the moment conquered, and she wrote a note requesting to see Monsieur de Beaumont instantly. While she was waiting anxiously for this interview, a letter was given her, which she knew to be from D'Egmont ; the words were few but terrible ; they confirmed her misfortune.

“ I find that we cannot live happily together ; our tempers never can agree : you have deceived me—I have perhaps deceived you ;—be that as it may, the bonds of matrimony must ever be galling fetters to minds so dissimilar as yours and mine. I have been long attached to Sophie de Féronce, and I find the boldness of

her character better suited to my taste and habits than the tameness of yours. Besides, she loves me—you only fear me ; be wise, and pursue happiness in your path, while I seek it in mine. Henceforth, we are nothing to each other, and on your péril, therefore, call yourself my wife. As long as you keep this secret, and do not persecute me, Monsieur de Beaumont will supply you from time to time with a small pension ; it is all I can do.

“ Farewell.”

Prepared as Bertha had been, she was not armed to bear this dreadful blow. For a short time, she remained horror-struck and motionless ; but great misfortunes lend an adventitious strength, which meet the exigency of the moment, and with something like composure, she received Monsieur de Beaumont, who had hastened to her summons.

He suffered almost as much as she herself suffered, and having, with a silent expression of detestation, perused the letter which Bertha held out to him, he mastered his feelings, and inform-

ed her, that from D'Egmont he had learned the situation in which she was placed; but he believed, and felt sure, that he had not learned all the truth. D'Egmont had recommended her to his care, but not as his wife.—He had promised to remit a small sum annually, but this he had only promised, and there was too much reason to doubt the fulfilment of any promise made by such a person.

Bertha shuddered, and for a moment forgot every other feeling in the indignation which roused her to defend herself, and clear her character from the imputation which was so basely imposed upon her. She related the outline of her story to De Beaumont; told him that her marriage had taken place in an obscure village on the confines of Switzerland; and that the only crime her conscience reproached her with, was that of having married a man whose real name and situation she was a stranger to, and above all, having married him without the consent of her friends. De Beaumont could not disbelieve her. Truth carries conviction with it; besides, he had other reasons for not doubt-

ing Bertha. Her family name, De Chanci, was known to him, and he had mercantile transactions with some of her relations.

When she ceased speaking, he remained for a moment silent ; that pause was dreadful to Bertha ; but quickly she was relieved by his saying, " What do you wish me to do ? in what way can I serve you ? Command me." Then, without waiting for a reply, he continued, " I will place you under my mother's care, not as Madame D'Egmont, but as Mademoiselle de Chanci, till such time as you can hear from Swisserland, and I will myself accompany you, if you allow me, and see you in safety with your friends there."—" Oh ! never, never to Swisserland," replied Bertha, bursting into tears ; " I have no friends left, no home, no country. I have forfeited them all. But these tears are idle ; I ask your pardon for thus giving way to sorrow. My faults are punished. My misfortunes are the consequences of my errors : I have no right to complain."—" You do indeed distress me," said the kind De Beaumont, " but it is the distress of your refusing my sympathy



that wounds me most. Let us think only at present, I beseech you, of getting you away from this abode, in every way so unfitting your situation, and wait till time has calmed your mind, before you form any resolution. Allow me to take the management of your conduct till this time has elapsed, and deign, I conjure you, to accompany me to my mother's, to whom I will introduce you as a Swiss friend purposing to go to England as ——."—"As what?"—"As a governess, perhaps," added De Beaumont, fearful, at the same time, of wounding her. That which De Beaumont spoke of as a temporary resource, for the moment's convenience, sunk permanently into Bertha's mind as a future plan to pursue. She acceded to all that Monsieur de Beaumont proposed. Her arrangements were quickly made, and that night she became an inmate of Madame de Beaumont's house.

Madame de Beaumont was a good bustling Englishwoman, full of self-consequence. She had married an unfortunate foreigner, whom she tormented, till his death, with preferring

#### CHAPTER IV.

every thing that she could not get, to every thing which was in her possession ; and by drawing eternal comparisons between England and France, always to the disadvantage of the latter. This teasing good sort of woman loved being useful, but she loved also that her usefulness should be known and acknowledged, and the protégée was never to forget for one moment the exact limits of her sphere of action.

In Madame de Beaumont's house Bertha enjoyed, or might have enjoyed, the pleasures of varied society ; but too much distressed by the past, and too anxious for the future, to mix in society, she adhered to her determination of remaining as much as possible in the room allotted to her, and, unless it was to take a walk with Monsieur de Beaumont, she seldom or ever could be prevailed upon to quit it. Madame de Beaumont, who had a certain constitutional activity about her that never could let any one be tranquil, and who turned the most indifferent trivial things to the account of the principle she had set up for herself, that of usefulness, soon discovered that Bertha possessed accomplish-

ments, and had a demeanour and a charm which would do honour to her society, and, therefore, conceived it would, in fact, be rendering her a service to draw her forth, and show her off to advantage. After a certain time had elapsed, therefore, Madame de Beaumont made Bertha understand, that remaining longer secluded would be disagreeable to her; and she quickly learned that in this world we have no enjoyment which we do not pay a price for. Bertha, therefore, mingled in Madame de Beaumont's society, *at first* unwillingly, but gradually somewhat of amusement mixed itself with her compliance, and, in despite of herself, transitory gleams of pleasure chequered the gloom which darkened her fate; but nevertheless, her situation became hourly more irksome to her independent mind, and upon every account Bertha began seriously to think of adopting that resource which Monsieur de Beaumont had at first pointed out as an excuse for insuring her reception at his mother's. The idea, too, of imposing upon Madame de Beaumont, of accepting her protection, and receiving her kindness under false pretences,

was insufferably painful, and she determined no longer to continue the deception. A letter from Switzerland confirmed her in this resolution. The letter was from her cousin. Though it was worded with a tender feeling of regret and wounded friendship, yet its purport was expressive of suspicion on her own part, that Bertha no longer merited friendship; and it conveyed the decided orders of her father no more to hold any correspondence with a person who had forfeited all right to consideration or esteem. It appeared that they had heard of Bertha's separation from her husband, but had heard it ascribed to her own misconduct.

There was a quality in Bertha's character not wholly commendable, which, however, formed a part of that mixed tissue of good and evil which constitutes the composition of all human characters. This quality was a tranquil but inflexible indignation at unjust suspicion or unmerited ill treatment; and it became an asperity of feeling very little accordant with the general softness of her nature.

Cast off, in a manner, by every natural con-

nection, she determined, henceforward, to live and die independent of them—to provide for her own existence—to suffice to herself—to draw within her all those finer affections of the soul—all those refinements of imagination which she acknowledged had led her from the path of happiness. And, as she seemed to speak an unknown language, to feel and think alone, she determined it should, indeed, be alone that she would live, shaping her outward seeming to that pattern which suited the common run of the world.

At one moment Bertha determined to confide to Madame de Beaumont her real situation, and request her counsel and advice; but the eager curiosity of the latter to pry into her secret, and the unfeeling and rude manner in which she sometimes questioned her, closed the lips of Bertha, and a coldness ensued, which increased into mutual dislike. This was confirmed on Bertha's part by discovering that she was suspected of a design to become the wife of Monsieur de Beaumont. After all, was it to be wondered that doubts should arise respecting

her character, considering the manner in which Monsieur de Beaumont had brought her into the house? And ought she not to bear meekly the contumely which such suspicions entailed? Bertha had the justice to confess this to herself; but, nevertheless, she felt it too painfully to submit without making an effort to change her situation.

To Monsieur de Beaumont Bertha confided her determination to adopt a measure he had himself suggested to her, namely, to seek the situation of governess in England. "I would apply to your mother," she added, "and request the favour of her to assist me in my career; but I must first tell her my story. I cannot bear longer to deceive her as to my actual situation and circumstances."

Monsieur de Beaumont appeared extremely agitated by her communication. "You know not," at length he said, after some effort to command his feelings, "You know not what you are about to undertake, nor the many disadvantages and humiliations attending such a step. Surely you will not act further in this business

without having apprized your relations in Switzerland. Surely to be restored to their protection would be more conducive to your happiness—more suiting your situation.” “Never,” said Bertha quickly, “never will I seek their protection. Could I ever be restored to their protection and countenance, (of which a letter I have received assures me to the contrary,) how should I henceforth live with them? Subdued—oppressed by a sense of having deserved my own reproach, indeed, but not of meriting their contempt—while they would constantly make me feel a weight of obligation my mind would never acknowledge. No, De Beaumont, this is not my nature. You see me gentle, and, in appearance, meek; I am so in regard to temper; but, in regard to my feelings and opinions, nothing alters—nothing changes them, except self-conviction; and, in this instance, I cannot accuse myself of that which they would accuse me of—I cannot feel that I deserve the reproach with which I know they would load me. I should sink beneath my own level were I to humble me by suing to them for protection; whereas, if I

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seek, by privations and exertions, to make myself an independent existence, that very exertion—that very pursuit—will give health to my sick mind. Do not oppose me, I conjure you, De Beaumont.”

Monsieur de Beaumont's better reason was silenced by the vehemence of her feelings, and he ceased to advise, and sought to serve her in her own way. One only favour he entreated—this was, never to tell his mother of her marriage. To Bertha he alleged the excuse of the promised pension, which she would forfeit from Comte D'Egmont by a disclosure of this secret; but in his own mind he doubted the legality of her marriage altogether; and was convinced, that, as Bertha de Chanci, she would be more respected than as the cast-off wife of a man of very doubtful character.

Bertha acceded to her friend's request, but entreated him to lose no time in endeavouring to procure for her, through his correspondents in London, the situation she so anxiously desired. He promised to employ himself busily in furthering her wishes, and for this purpose intro-



duced to her acquaintance a Monsieur de Rémonville, who was a young man employed by government to transact a thousand affairs which his abilities enabled him to execute, and of which his superiors in rank and fortune reaped the advantage. This young man had connections in England, which gave him the means of procuring for Bertha the situation she desired to obtain; and he wrote directly to a Lady Farnborough, who immediately agreed to engage Miss de Chanci, but could not receive her for a couple of months. During this interval Monsieur de Beaumont entreated she would remain where she was; and, partly persuaded by his reasons, partly by her own wishes, and partly by necessity, Bertha consented to his entreaty. But she almost repented having done so, when she found that Madame de Beaumont's suspicions of her daily assumed a more open and offensive character.

Monsieur de Beaumont at length became sensible of his mother's ill temper, and generously determined, as far as regarded himself, to silence them effectually. He told Bertha that business

called him away to Lyons, but that he left her with the less regret since he had given her a substitute in 'Monsieur de Rémónville, who, he knew, would serve her by every means in his power. "You will allow me sometimes to write to you," said Monsieur de Beaumont, as he kissed the hand of Bertha when he took leave of her. "Remember you have only to command me. I wish I could be of use to you." "You have been so, and I shall never forget it," she replied, pressing his hand affectionately. "And I can never forget you," rejoined De Beaumont. "Farewell, farewell."

## CHAPTER V.

“ Wherever you are, (said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus,) remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror.”

Who that has ever known love, has not pronounced a thousand times, that the passion they cherished would last for ever; and who that has survived such rash vows for a few years, has not experienced these “*for evers*” to be like the beings that pronounced them, evanescent and unstable? Time fades the colouring of passion; time softens the poignancy of grief. These truths, owned with difficulty when they regard ourselves, force themselves, nevertheless, upon the conviction. It were wise not to disdain, but rather to welcome them, as messengers of peace; they are the opiums which heaven bestows to lull our woe.

Bertha felt the loss of Monsieur de Beaumont, but not as he felt her loss. He wrote to his mother, entreating her to lay aside the idle suspicions he knew she entertained respecting himself and Miss de Chanci, and besought her to render her stay at Paris as agreeable as possible. But nothing could drive from Madame de Beaumont's belief the idea which had fixed itself there, of Bertha's having laid a plan to inveigle her son into a matrimonial connection, for it is the property of weak minds to adhere with tenacity to petty objects within their own sphere of intellect, and overlook all greater concerns, however important. She expressed her fears to her maid, who, already envious of Miss de Chanci, greedily received any intelligence which foreboded her disgrace, and this woman related the tale, with many embellishments, to a lover of hers, who happened to be in the service of Carlovitz. Carlovitz, who had never forgotten, though he was forced for a time to relinquish his pursuit of Bertha, seized upon this circumstance with avidity, in order to turn it to his own pur-

poses. He wrote an anonymous letter to Madame de Beaumont, informing her that she was basely deceived by the young person whom she so generously protected, as Mademoiselle de Chanci had resided sometime at the Hotel de —, under the protection of a person styling himself Comte D'Egmont. That, for the time being, she had actually borne his name, but that, since she had been deserted by him, she had no longer dared to assume a title to which she was conscious she had no right. In corroboration of this assertion, he referred to the owners of the house where Bertha had lodged, adding, that they were ready to prove that Monsieur de Beaumont had paid a large sum to them, in order to defray the expences incurred by the lady during her residence in their lodgings.

The moment Madame de Beaumont perused this fatal letter, she made the inquiry to which it directed her; and the fact, which was but too true, (although unknown to Bertha,) of Monsieur de Beaumont's having paid expences, which she imagined were defrayed by her hus-

band, afforded Madame de Beaumont such apparent certitude of that which she suspected, that, in the first transports of her fury, she hastened to Bertha, with the letter in her hand, and loaded her with the bitterest invective. It was sometime ere Madame D'Egmont could comprehend the cause of this outrage; but when, at length, Madame de Beaumont, exhausted by passion, threw down the letter before her, Bertha but too clearly perceived the extent of the evils which encompassed her. Friendless—forsaken—unprotected—her fame blighted—herself become an object of contempt and contumely,—all the powers of her mind seemed suspended as she sat pale and motionless without attempting to utter a reply. Yet her's was the look of horror—not of fear; but Madame de Beaumont was no nice observer, and paleness and silence were, with her, the sure evidences of guilt. As soon as she recovered breath, she, therefore, resumed with increased virulence; and, after bestowing upon her the most injurious epithets, she ended by desiring her instantly to quit her house. Then the hectic of wounded pride and

burning shame did for a moment tinge Bertha's pallid cheek, and her heart swelled almost to suffocation at the indignity she had endured. But now she *would* not, even if she *could*, have deigned to extirpate herself; and, with the energy of despair, she hastily prepared to comply with Madame de Beaumont's reiterated desire. She knew not—she cared not—whither she should go. It was enough that she left the presence of one who had thus stigmatized and insulted her. Yet, as she crossed the threshold, a groan burst as if from her very heart. It startled even Madame de Beaumont. She hesitated—would have detained her—but in another instant she was gone !

Carlovitz, who had conjectured what would be the result of his machinations, had been secretly on the watch for a considerable time ; and, unseen by her, beheld his victim quit the sheltering roof, of which he had been the means of depriving her. Her hurried and unequal step, her whole demeanour, betrayed the agitation of her mind as she hastened along, she knew not whither, and without any determined object .

view. Warily he followed her steps, and as she mechanically turned into a less public street to avoid the gaze of the passengers, he gradually approached her till he was at her side. Veiling his malicious triumph under an appearance of courtesy, he accosted her with the ordinary salutations, and expressing his surprise and regret that she should be walking unprotected in the streets of Paris, he requested permission to lead her to his carriage, which he had left at a little distance, and which would take her wherever she wished to go. This offer immediately roused Bertha to a sense of her situation, and with a mixture of terror and aversion, she rejected all his offers of assistance. He was not, however, to be so easily repulsed, and he determined, after having gone so far, to make one still bolder effort to get her into his power. Drawing her arm within his, he forcibly hurried her along, while terror had deprived Bertha of all power of resistance, when, at that moment, as if sent by Heaven, Monsieur de Rémonville stood before them. Uttering a wild cry, she called him to her aid, and he instantly interposed to her



rescue. “By what title do you pretend to offer violence to this lady?” said the latter to Carlovitz. “By one which you have no right to dispute,” was the answer. High words ensued, a crowd gathered, and the consequences would have been most distressing, had not Rémonville silenced Carlovitz by saying, “Whatever you may have to say to me hereafter, here is my name, my address. At present, you see your interference is hateful to this lady—leave her, or be it at your peril that you dare thus to continue your outrage.” Carlovitz retired abashed, and muttering between his teeth, while Rémonville conducted Miss de Chanci to the carriage that had been previously prepared by Carlovitz. As soon as she recovered sufficiently to speak, she said, with the forced calmness of despair, “You have rescued me from a disgraceful situation, from the power of a hateful being who persecutes me; but I know not how I shall repay you—I am an outcast, forlorn, friendless; Madame de Beaumont will not longer admit me within her doors—I am unfortunate, very unfortunate, impru-

dent, but not guilty. I have no friend to succour me,—protect me or I perish.” Rémonville’s countenance spoke all the respectful interest which could reassure her, but he only uttered a few incoherent words of sorrow and astonishment till they arrived at his door. He assisted Bertha out of the carriage, and handed her to his apartments. A moment of great awkwardness ensued. Bertha, overcome with all that had passed, with all that she had so recently suffered, sat silent in a kind of insensibility. Rémonville, opposite to her, in an agitated, distressed manner, professing offers of service, and then again saying, “What can I do? I am alone here, without servants, without any female relation or friend to offer you protection. De Beaumont absent, what can I do? At all events, I will never forsake you: you are at least in safety here for a time; recruit your spirits, I beseech you, with repose.” “Gracious Heaven,” he added hurriedly, “and *you* have suffered such indignity, you who ought to be——” The remainder of his words were not intelligible, but the sentiment which would have uttered them was

better expressed by silence. This expression of heartfelt concern and interest overcame Bertha, and she wept with unrepressed emotion, but the tears were tears of balm.

By the care of Rémonville, Bertha soon found herself established in a comfortable apartment, for Rémonville gave her up his own, seeking one for himself in another house near her; a maid-servant to attend her, and every indulgence that ease and luxury could supply. But could she enjoy this situation—could she enjoy these comforts when she knew that they again placed her under obligations not in her power to repay? and the imperious sense of its being a duty to relinquish them, deprived her of all power of profiting by their possession.

Her first care was to write to De Beaumont, but he had left Lyons for Marseilles, and three weeks elapsed before she could hear from him; during these three weeks, Bertha sometimes forgot, in the respectful care of Rémonville, the pain and impropriety of her situation; for it was impossible not to be touched by his unremitting and delicate attentions. During the

course of the time they spent together, Rémonville frequently alluded to Bertha's past life, but as he never did so, however guardedly, without visibly affecting her, he forebore touching upon a subject which he perceived gave her such anguish. To his friend De Beaumont he also wrote, and from him he did not disguise the curiosity and interest she excited; but De Beaumont was, for many reasons, true to the promise he had made, and the advice he had given to Bertha; nor would any power have made him disclose more, than that she was Mademoiselle de Chanci, of a respectable family, but reduced in her circumstances, and seeking an independent existence by her own honourable industry.

"I wish there was any other mode," said Rémonville, "in which you could follow the bent of your mind, which, I see, leads you to seek for independence, than that of becoming a governess. You know not, you cannot know, the humiliations, the thousand torments, to which it will inevitably expose you, especially in England, where the master of the family invariably

thinks more of his cook than of his children's governess ; the salary which he willingly gives the former he grudges to the latter, and conceives that every mental perfection ought to be bought cheaply, while those of the senses are to be paid for at any price. In a word, a governess is expected to possess every attribute of mind and manner which can enable her to qualify her pupils for the highest spheres, yet to be set apart herself from all society. This miserable non-descript of perfection is not to associate with the domestics belonging to the establishment, nor yet must she dare to mingle with the masters of the family. The person to whom the latter entrust their dearest interest, their children, is not fit society for them, and, even if the mother graciously submits to an hour of the governess's company, the father always disdains such condescension: the effect produced on the pupils' minds by such conduct is evident, and the consequences fatal." Bertha smiled at the picture Rémouville drew of English tyranny, for there is liberty in the laws of England, and tyranny in many of its customs. Notwithstanding

ing this representation, she remained inflexible in her resolves. Bertha had a thousand reasons for desiring to escape for ever from the continent, and with the mistaken impetuosity of nature and of youth, she thought no evil unknown could equal those which she had already proved; and very shortly after this discussion a letter came to Monsieur de Rémonville, requesting he would hasten, if it were possible, Miss de Chanci's arrival in London, as Lady Farnborough was to arrive there from the country immediately. "I am quite satisfied," said Bertha with eagerness, "to suffer whatever disadvantages I may have to contend with; let me only set off directly." "So very soon?" rejoined De Rémonville reproachfully. "It cannot be too soon," replied Bertha. Rémonville said she should be obeyed, and had only one request to make to her, which was, that she would allow him to see her safely settled in her new situation. To this Bertha agreed. Their travelling preparations were soon adjusted, and two days after, they set out in a diligence for Boulogne.

The monotonous aspect of the country, the

jumbling, yet slow movement of the carriage, afforded no pleasurable or inspiring sensations; yet, as Rémonville sat opposite to his friend, although they rarely spoke, and although he seldom raised his eyes to her countenance, he felt he would not exchange his situation for one of more personal convenience; while Bertha, in the protection of a person whom she knew, (for this knowledge is surely intuitive,) would have laid down life for her sake, enjoyed that soothing but dangerous state of confidence and calm which would only require permanency to make it perfect happiness. At Boulogne, Rémonville met with a friend, Captain Harley, who was cruising about, and who offered to take him over to England, instead of going in one of the packets; the former explaining to him that he was accompanying a lady, and who the lady was; Captain Harley, with all the polite good nature of an English seaman, proposed that Miss de Chañci should be invited also, and added, "Instead of sleeping at Dover, you shall both come (the lady willing) to my mother's house, which is very little out of your road, and it oc-

curs to me, that I have heard the name of De Chanci before. Is it not that of the person who is going as governess to my aunt, Lady Farnborough?" Rémonville answered in the affirmative, and the proposal being made to Bertha, she readily acceded, and it was agreed they were to sail that night.

A boat was in readiness to convey themselves and their baggage on board the *Swiftsure*, which was lying out a couple of miles at sea. To avoid the bustle of the harbour, Captain Harley had stationed this boat a good way down the shore, and they had a long way to walk ere they reached the place where they were to embark.

It was a calm grey evening—night was fast closing in—the sky was overcast, and, except one long line of light which bounded the horizon, all beside was wrapped in shade. The walls of Boulogne faded into a dark uncertain mass, which derived dignity not its own, from the uncertain and mystical light in which it presented itself, that "*Lucé incerta é Mista*," in



which imagination delights to revel. The wind was hushed, but the sound of the waves in regular recurrence stealing up the shore, made a melancholy whispering, and seemed to Bertha's fancy the last adieus of friends and country which she left for ever.

As they advanced, the ground became splashy, and here and there long wreaths of sea-weed rendered their footsteps slippery and insecure. The sea-mew moved with heavy wing around, and gave a melancholy cry, which accorded well with the cheerless waste over which they were passing. One large wreck lay to the right, and appeared more huge from the flatness of all around. The sea, the shore, the sky, seemed melting into each other. "There is something always sublime," said Rémonville, "in unbounded space,—we seem the only living creatures in this wilderness;" and Bertha, without replying, involuntarily clung to his arm, with a deep sense of her own individual loneliness in the waste of life. Scenes of sunshine and prosperity, of mirth and festivity, may pass from remembrance, together with those who have shar-

ed their brilliancy; but such scenes as that in which Bertha and Rémonville were placed, where the aspect of nature adds to the association of ideas, and bears a fancied connection with our fate,—such scenes, and those who see and feel their influence, with us rarely pass into oblivion. Bertha became fatigued—she leaned unconsciously on Rémonville. He dreaded to dissipate the luxury of his feelings by discourse, yet, at last, some half-breathed expressions of concern for Bertha broke the silence which they had hitherto preserved; the sound of the human voice at such a moment, who can describe its power? “I am not weary, indeed I am not;” replied Bertha to Rémonville’s inquiries, and as she spoke they passed under the bow of the wrecked vessel which they had seen from afar. At the same instant a man rushed from the other side, and presenting a pistol at Rémonville, fired at him. The shrieks of Bertha, and the report of the shot, were heard by the sailors in the boat, which was lying out at no great distance. They came running to the spot whence they heard the noise, but in the interim the assassin

had fled, and Bertha's whole care was directed to her friend. So sudden—so unexpected—was this transaction, that no one thought of pursuing the assassin, and Rémonville alone engrossed their attention. A dog, however, of Rémonville's ran after him, barking violently, and in its rage tore a piece of the man's coat, which it brought back in his mouth. At the moment Bertha did not regard this circumstance, but afterwards it recurred to her, and the animal became dear to her for its fidelity to its master. Rémonville assured Bertha he was only slightly wounded in the arm; and hearing there was a surgeon on board the *Swiftsure*, he insisted on going into the boat, instead of returning to Boulogne. Bertha, distressed and dismayed, could only entreat Rémonville to adopt that measure which would give him the most immediate succour; and as they were nearer the boat than the town, and that the *Swiftsure* was making fast towards them, she consented to his wishes; and, after a few minutes of painful anxiety on her part, and of some suffering on that of her friend, they found themselves on board the

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Swiftsure. The story was related to Captain Harley, and relief directly procured for Rémonville. The wound proved of a more serious nature than he had acknowledged, and he was obliged to remain below in the cabin, and give up Bertha's society—a measure which inflicted as much pain as the accident which had befallen him. Captain Harley did not spare his oaths on the stupidity of his sailors for not having pursued the author of the mischief, and could hardly be prevailed upon not to send on shore to detect and punish the villain if it were possible. Various were the conjectures they formed respecting the motive which prompted the crime. It did not appear that it was committed for money, as no attempt was made to rob them. The shot fired, the assassin had directly fled. "Have you any secret enemy," said Captain Harley laughing; "any rival in love who seeks your life?" "None, that I know," replied Rémonville, but he appeared agitated by the question. "Well," rejoined his friend, "nothing should prevent my going immediately back to Boulogne but the idea that I shall return there in a

few days, and make diligent inquiries to bring this affair to light."

The day after they landed at Dover, Captain Harley wished Rémonville to remove directly to his mother's, but the surgeon pronounced he had too much fever to bear the motion of a carriage, and must remain some time in perfect quietness. "Then I shall also remain," said Bertha, "of course." Rémonville coloured with pleasure, but being left alone with her, he said, "Mademoiselle de Chanci must surely do justice to my motive, if I conquer my own wishes, and entreat her to allow my friend Captain Harley and his sister, who I know joins him, to accompany her in her way to town without further delay, since, to remain here alone with me could not in this country be advantageous." When Bertha reflected on the circumstances of her own situation, the truth immediately forced itself upon her, and she acquiesced in Rémonville's proposal. "But whither am I to go, after waiting at Mrs Harley's till you join me?" "You are not to wait for me, dear Mademoiselle de Chanci. I have other friends, worthy, excellent persons,

more suited to be your protectors than myself ; with them you will find a respectable asylum, till you are received in Lady Farnborough's family. These persons, although by misfortune reduced to an humble situation, are fitted by their virtue to adorn any sphere, and I feel proud to present them even to you. Their names are De Chatelani. Some day you must allow me to speak to you of their merits ; in the meantime, suffice it to assure you, they will gladly show you every attention, and to them I can commit you with something like a feeling of comfort and security." Bertha hesitated for a moment in replying, because she was afraid that by going to other people's houses, she should again incur all those evils of dependence, which she deemed it more cruel to endure than any other. To be handed thus about like a bale of goods from one to another, scarcely to form a friendship before the tie was broken, and one of new and uninteresting kind was again to be had recourse to, filled her with despondency. The mind sickens at such perpetual change, and the description of virtues whose influence we

have never felt, when detached from all the endearments of social intercourse, produces no lively or corresponding interest in the heart ; so that Bertha listened impatiently to her friend. "Men," said she mentally, "men always arrogate to themselves the right of judging for, and commanding us in every relation of our lives with them ; they think they have a right to overrule our wills, and to make our fate ; but there is a free will given to every individual by an higher power, which, at all events, exempts the mind from slavery." Bertha's own mind had been fatally warped by peculiar circumstances of unhappiness, and what she had experienced in her particular situation, the bitterness of disappointment had converted into a general maxim. It is perhaps one of the most fatal consequences of tyranny, whether acting upon society or individuals, that it poisons the pure current of thought, and either debases those on whom it has acted into brutal stupidity, or gives them an undue abhorrence of all wholesome restraint, or friendly guidance.

Such was the nature of Bertha's character,

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that the latter evil was that which fastened upon her with daily increasing influence. While she was ruminating on the thoughts which Rémonville's advice excited, Captain Harley entered the room; and in his mongrel jargon between French and English, introduced a young girl to her acquaintance, whom he was dragging rather than leading into the room, while she slunk back in awkward shyness, and seemed to suffer so much, that Bertha felt for her, and endeavoured to relieve her confusion by giving her a chair, offering to take from her hand a basket which seemed to encumber her, but which, nevertheless, she tenaciously held. In the interim, Captain Harley explained in his way, all that Bertha had already guessed, namely, that the lady was his sister, that Rémonville had previously arranged she should accompany them to London, and that they were to set out in a few hours. All this did not lessen Bertha's sense of dependance, and while she acknowledged a feeling of gratitude, she suffered painfully at the idea of being under the necessity of incurring obligation. When left alone with Miss Flami-



nia Harley, the latter at once threw off the bashful demèanour, which was merely an effect of overweening vanity, united to bad habit, and commenced in most voluble discourse to explain to her companion, that if she appeared particularly shy, it was only because she was afraid of her brother Tom; adding, he is the best tempered soul in the world, but so violent and passionate, he always thinks he is walking the quarter-deck and hallooing to his men in a storm; then I get into a passion too; so, to avoid this, I have determined lately never to speak one word in his presence; but the moment his back is turned, I make use of my time. All this was uttered in French, in compliment to Bertha, such French as an English boarding-school affords. Miss Flaminia Harley did not pause for a reply, and, as Bertha would have been much at a loss what to say, she was glad to find that the spring, once permitted to act, was in no danger of stopping of its own accord. Miss Flaminia continued. “When I get to my aunt’s, dear Lady Farnborough, then I make amends for all my lost pleasure; not but what she can be cross

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too, but then she is cross and good-natured turn about so often, that I forget which is which." This communicative person would have given the whole history of all her family to her companion, had not a summons to Rémonville ended their conference:

Bertha could not take leave of the latter without great emotion. It seemed to her uncertain when, if ever, they should meet again. She exaggerated the danger which might accrue from his wound; and the promise of following her to town as soon as he was well was the only consolation she felt when she departed. When in the carriage once again with strangers, she felt as if it were only then that she learned her forlorn and friendless situation.

Scarcely was the carriage in motion than Miss Flaminia's inquisitive glances told Bertha that her tears were not unobserved. There is something in tears which is sacred—they are profaned when they are seen. "Are all the men in your country very handsome?" said Miss Flaminia to her companion, who could hardly help smiling at the idea that a handsome man

was the only possible cause for exciting tears, which, however, a certain air and manner that accompanied her words seemed to imply. Before Bertha could answer, Captain Harley made a polite assertion, which saved her all further trouble. "What a fool you are, Flemmy." This drew a retort courteous from the sister, and Bertha knew enough of English to be desirous of allaying the impending storm, and ventured to say, that she believed Miss Flaminia mistook the country of which she was a native, as Swiss countrymen, honest beings, are not famed for their personal beauty; "but were I to indulge my partial opinion," added Bertha, "I should say; they derive their consequence from a better and a more worthy source." "I don't know if you are partial," rejoined Captain Harley, "but you have spoke more sense in three words than Flemmy ever did in her whole lifetime." "Well, brother, you might have let Miss de Chanci find that out herself." "One may easily find that you are good humoured at least," said her brother; and, harmony being once more restored, Miss Flaminia again turned

to Bertha with pertinacious inquisitiveness. "I hope the wounded gentleman is better. I assure you it is not our fault, but his own, that he is not with us, for we would have come in the coach instead of the chariot on purpose to take him, only he would not. I hope you are not very sorry;" and she stared at Bertha; the latter blushed, said she was very good—very attentive; and Captain Harley good humouredly observed, that the wind had changed from south to south-east; a point more to the west. This marine information producing no reply, a dead silence ensued.

Bertha's mind was sadly occupied in taking a retrospect of her past life, nor did any very favourable prospect for the future enliven the dreary contemplation. But if there is a cure, at least an alleviation, for mental suffering, it is travelling through a country that is new to us. Insensibly our thoughts are diverted from their usual routine of selfish speculations, and led into other channels, where general views and varied comparisons afford a wider range to intellect—where new sources of thought, more di-

versified, if not so intensely interesting as those which relate to merely personal feeling, give vigour and health to the mind. There are no very striking or commanding features in the country Bertha was passing through; but, although the undulations of the ground were, to her eye, (formed on the scale of Alpine scenery,) diminutive and insignificant, still the waving slopes of green knolls and cultured fields, even in their winter attire, bore the appearance of industry, of peace, and a promise of luxurious abundance. Upon the whole, the first English country which a foreigner passes from Dover to London, conveys a pretty just specimen of the general character of English landscape. The neat appearance of every hamlet—the look of comfort that surrounds the houses—the sameness in the mode of decorating the ground around them, which differs only according to the degree of wealth possessed by each inhabitant, but is seldom varied by any originality in taste—never embellished by any beauty of architecture,—all this outward face of things, so demonstrative of equality and of industry, made

Bertha think how blessed the people must be whose lives, devoted to usefulness, give to all around them that tranquil uniformity, which seems the security for its continuance in the same degree of prosperity.

The felicity which we see diffused around has certainly a benign influence over ourselves if we are not habitually hardened by selfishness, or are not suffering under the pressure of any immediate evil. Bertha acknowledged this influence; for, without any cause for joy which referred immediately to her own fate, she sunk into a quiescent state of satisfaction, from which she was aroused only by arriving at Knoll Park.

CHAPTER VI.

“Heureux celui qui sçait quitter l'état qui le quitte, et rester homme en depit du sort.”

ROUSSEAU.

A PALING surrounded a smooth and level lawn, some well-trimmed evergreens were placed in an orderly manner by the side of the gravel-walk which conducted to the house, which house was a large square red building, whose colour glared upon the eye, and whose form (if form that may be called which consisted of one uniform mass of brick) rose in the middle of the above lawn, without any thing to relieve its huge inelegance, save a bright green varanda which stuck like a well painted bird-cage to the front-door. A great bell rung, a house-dog barked, and after several persons had peeped at them from the window, a bustle was heard, ser-

vants made their appearance, and they were admitted with a great air of consequence. Captain Harley alighting, preceded the ladies upstairs, and there Mrs Harley stood to receive them. She welcomed Bertha with much consequential kindness, and three daughters were introduced, besides Miss Flaminia, Cornelia, Jemima, and Flora. They all slunk back as if ashamed of themselves, till their sister whispered them loud enough to be overheard, "Don't be afraid; she is very good-natured, and will tell you all about the French fashions." This reassurance seemed to give them comfort, and they all flew upon Bertha at once, asking her if she was not glad to come to England, and if she had been very frightened in the packet; and if she would not choose to drink tea, till the impossibility of answering them individually seemed to exonerate her from all reply; the Mama alone preserved a dignified silence. | Many persons shelter themselves and their dulness under a profound taciturnity; and perhaps a silent fool is not one of the worst fools.) The party at length sat down in a circle, and looked at



each other. Bertha felt as though she had dropped down among a set of new beings, and she looked around her with a cheerless sensation of being alone in the world. Mrs Harley observed, that her young people would entertain Miss de Chanci, as they spoke her language; for her part, it was not the fashion in her young days to trouble ladies with such matters; she would not pretend to say, (declaring all the time, by her tone and look, what was her real opinion,) she would not pretend to say which was best, but the good old English was enough for her. Having thus spoken, she took out a small box, and began netting with unwearied assiduity.

The furniture of the apartment was splendid, but it was carefully set in order round the room, while a few old small cane chairs were those appropriated for actual use. No stray book, not even a newspaper, had found its way into this well-ordered room; if it was dedicated to any particular purpose, it must have been to that of ennui. Bertha had not fortunately time to remain in it long, for a bell rung; Mrs Harley looked at her watch, observed, "There's the half-

hour-bell ; *Mam'selle* will perhaps like to take off her hat and cloak before supper. Tom, my dear, don't trouble yourself, never mind your boots ; we are happy to have you any how."—" I did not intend to dress," said Captain Harley, whistling. Miss Flaminia begged to conduct Bertha to her room ; and she observed a sort of dispute amongst the girls which should appropriate her as their own plaything. Bertha was hustled out of the room ; and as soon as she found herself left with Miss Flaminia, the latter immediately broke forth with, " Well, what do you think of Mama,—isn't she a quiz ? But I assure you she has powerful relations, who may be of use to you in the line you mean to follow ?" Bertha stared, repeating, " Line I mean to follow ?" somewhat in a tone of displeasure. Her companion, who really meant to be kind, looked quite terrified, and hastened to add, " Dear, don't be so angry ; I don't intend to affront you ; but the French gentleman did tell my brother, that you meant to be a governess, that is to say, to educate young ladies of fashion ;" and a great stress was laid on the

word fashion. Bertha smiled, and smiled partly at her own idle pride, which could not endure to hear from another the name and designation of the situation she had chosen to adopt. How often is it a name, and not a fact, which shocks us? Bertha, reproaching herself for the bad grace with which she received Miss Flaminia's offers of service, endeavoured to behave with greater courtesy; and having excused herself from appearing at supper, bade her good evening, and closed her door for the night.

When Bertha was left alone, she again experienced all those bitter feelings of desolation and dependance, natural to a mind such as hers, at being thus cast upon the "protection of strangers, and those strangers so different from herself, or from all she had ever loved or admired. She endeavoured, however, to conquer this unavailing regret; and the next morning she arrayed her countenance in smiles to meet the Harleys, acknowledging, that it is a positive duty to repay the kindness shown to us, however mistaken or inelegant in its mode, by gentleness and complacency. "See," said Mrs Harley,

“how *Mam’selle* comes into a room. Have I not always shown you, girls, how you should do, but you would never mind me?” The awkwardness this educating of children upon company always occasions had scarcely subsided, when the four Miss Harleys approached Bertha, examining her dress, exclaiming, “La, how funny; but I should be ashamed to wear my hat so. Well, it is very pretty; but I should not know what to do with my shawl, it would be always hanging about among my feet.” While another cried, “Do teach me, do show me, won’t you now? You look so good-natured.” The tea-kettle brought a happy diversion in favour of Bertha, and the business of the day commenced. After breakfast, Bertha was obliged to attend Mrs Harley through the whole management of her domestic concerns,—cows and pigs,—hens and chickens,—kitchen and garret,—were all severally shown off, till Bertha, pale and weary, hoped to be permitted to rest in an agreeable evergreen walk, which she had seen from the windows, and whither she had resorted for refuge; but scarcely had she reach-

ed it, when the tribe of girls came running out of breath, and declaring, "She must come and see Tom's stables; he will never forgive you if you don't." To the stables then she went. The same neatness, the same precision reigned, even to the cost of the animals, who were condemned to lose their ears and their tails in its honour. Bertha had heard much of the fame of English horses; when she saw these, how different were her feelings of fancied admiration from those now excited by reality. The wild eye of fire, the flowing mane, the nostril breathing impatience, and the tail waving gracefully, or blown by the wind; all these were exchanged for a smooth coat, a hogged mane, a docked tail, and a neat groom leading the poor disgraced animal up and down in a kind of measured pace. "Miss de Chanci," said Captain Harley, approaching her, "I have done Flemmy the honour to call that fine mare after her. She won the sweepstakes at ——— races last year, and I expect she will do as much for me this." Then going up to his groom, he left the ladies without waiting for a reply; but Miss Flemmy

insisted on doing the honours of the stable, and she effectually kept Bertha till it was time to dress for dinner. During the progress of dinner, which appeared to Bertha of never-ending tedium, the only conversation was, "Won't you drink a glass of wine with me? What part do you prefer? Richard," turning to the Maitre d'hotel, "how should this joint be cut? John, don't you see that dish is not straight? Give Miss de Chanci the melted butter;" and then a long pause of gravity, and an air of importance, which seemed to imply that dinner was an affair of state, till poor Bertha nearly dropped asleep. At length Mrs Harley desired her son to ring for candles in the drawing-room. Bertha wondered, but, with alacrity, hailed the sound ever after as the signal of escape. Captain Harley nodded to his mother when she arose to leave the room, and Bertha, waiting in the expectation that he was going to hand her, the girls all broke forth into a titter, saying, "No, no, you'll see no more of Tom, I can tell you, for some hours to come." The idea that she wanted to see Tom disconcerted Bertha, and

she left the room weary, disgusted, and mortified.

During a week that Bertha remained at Knoll Park, no variety occurred by which it was possible for her to distinguish one day from another; and every night when she retired to rest, and every morning when she arose, she felt that the evening and the morning were the only vicissitudes that marked the lapse of time. This suspension of sensation is not the blessed calm of tranquillity—it is as if sleeping we are conscious of being asleep, and vainly try to wake, in order to live again. Bertha dreaded this apathy—it was abhorrent to her nature—and she almost wished for pain, if pleasure were never again to excite emotion. The day of departure from Knoll Park at length arrived—the very motion of the carriage was relief, and seemed to give assurance to Bertha that she was leaving the lead of lethargy in its own mire of dulness. "Miss Flaminia was in high spirits"; and although her brother frequently reminded her, in no very courtly phrase, that she had not yet arrived at one of her jun-

ketting parties, and that he could dispense with the overflowing of her felicity, she continued, nevertheless, to talk with a profusion of words and an absence of ideas, which demands no quality from the hearer, except that of good nerves. On a near approach to London, Bertha found herself called upon for a more than usual share of this physical perfection. Her senses became gradually more and more confused by the innumerable concourse of carriages, which whirled in all directions. Animals driven to slaughter—carters swearing—miserable horses, whose last efforts were made for some hard task-master, who extracted work from expiring nature. That her attention rested on these objects of pain and misery rather than on those of pleasure and of splendour which abounded also, must be attributed not less to the scenes in which she had hitherto chiefly resided, (and which had given a pensive cast to her mind,) than to that peculiarity of her nature, which ever turned with a quicker sense of perception to sympathize in suffering than in pleasure,—for this melancholy sense of pain



fixes itself the more intensely where it can least afford relief. Driving through the bustle of London, on a foggy March morning, Bertha felt all that despondency which such a mind as hers must feel on entering a world wholly new to her, where no being awaited her approach, or would hallow her presence with a welcome. She gazed anxiously at the innumerable passengers as if she expected to find some one who interested her, while the melancholy conviction was at her heart, that no eye would meet hers with one glance of affection.

When Bertha crossed Westminster Bridge, she observed, through the dense fog, by a kind of brazen sun light, those various objects of magnificence which this country of commerce and wealth displays, and which its inhabitants pass by hourly without remarking. The proud Thames, bearing on its breast opulence from all parts of the world—the Gothic grandeur of Westminster Abbey, with all its associations of remembrance—St Paul's in the distance, together with that congregated mass of interminable building, which seemed still more immea-

surable viewed through the smoky atmosphere—all these excited in Bertha an exclamation of genuine wonder and amazement, which was gratifying to Captain Harley's ear.

She was set down at a plain-looking house in the neighbourhood of Westminster Abbey, and Miss Flaminia and her brother proceeded to Russell Square, after promising to call upon her in the course of a few days.

## CHAPTER VII.

Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields,  
Where freshness breathes, and dash the trembling drops  
From the bent bush, as through the verdant maze  
Of sweet-briar hedges I pursue my walk,  
Or taste the smell of dairy.

THOMSON.

THE appearance of Rémonville's friends was exactly what they had been described,—simple, but not vulgar—kind, but not officious. They conducted Bertha to the room destined for her : comfort, cleanliness, and, above all, the healing balm of kindness, made her feel she was not so desolate ; and when Madame de Chatelain placed a letter in her hand from Rémonville, the whole world again seemed bright, and she only begged to be alone to peruse its contents. These contents might not have amused any third person ; to Bertha they were replete with interest. A confused and vague sensation of

delight re-animated her—existence was no longer insipid—every thing in an instant had changed, and she allowed herself to float on the current of time, buoyed up with fallacious expectations of a happiness, vague and undefined. Rocked by these pleasing delusions, she fell asleep, but again awoke to reflection and care. The following day passed heavily, and personal illness added to the uneasiness of her mind. The agitation she experienced lest this should prevent her from seeking Lady Farnborough, and entering immediately upon her new duties, increased the evil she dreaded; and when night again returned, it was in vain she attempted to dismiss the thought, and to court repose.—Fearful dreams, the companions of a feverish sleep, deprived her of rest. When Madame de Chatelain came at a late hour the next day to inquire for Bertha, she was still in bed. Ashamed of transgressing the rules of a family whose hours were early and regular, (for she had learned that it is a duty to attend to the customs and accommodations of others,) she began to apologise; but Madame de Chatelain looking earnestly at her countenance, and kindly taking

her hand, said, "I am afraid *you* have too much reason for such indulgence; you are certainly far from well." This prediction proved true. Bertha became gradually worse. Her trials had worn out her frame; she was in a high fever, and to what passed for some days after, she became wholly insensible.

The first object she beheld, when consciousness returned, was Rémonville, but Rémonville so pale, so altered!—She exclaimed with a feeble voice, in whose very tremulousness there was indescribable tenderness, "How ill you have been, and no friend has been near you." His languid eyes sparkled with pleasure at the interest thus evinced for him, and Bertha marked with regret the effect produced by this simple expression of her feelings, and said no more. Gradually the event of the last few days returned to her recollection. The De Chateleans, alarmed for her life, had sent for Rémonville, who, disregarding his own health, flew to her. Bertha had walked through the valley of the shadow of death, but its horror was unknown to her,—she was alike ignorant of its terrors and its sufferings. Had the tomb opened

its portals then, she might have passed them unconscious of the gloom. There were after moments in her life when she could have wished they had done so.

Rémonville's wounded arm was still in a sling; the paleness of his countenance added to its interest, and on his expressive features was impressed that heartfelt devotion, which art cannot feign. It was under these peculiar circumstances of increased interest that Bertha again beheld him, and was restored to his society. It was a time too short for present felicity, too long for her future happiness. How different from the vulgar count of days and hours did the ensuing month of Bertha's existence present itself in after time to her recollection.

The gradual renovation which follows illness is to the moral world what the first days of spring are to nature. The soul seems regenerated, more pure, more capable of giving and eliciting every delicate impression,—yet soothed and calmed, and tuned to the finest harmony of its nature. With Bertha it was false security, a deceitful quiescence, as dangerous as it was delightful.

Rémonville watched the progress of her convalescence, studied her looks, prevented her wishes, made her, in short, live in that ideal world from whence to emerge is not to live at all, but to vegetate. Once or twice Bertha attempted to refer to her situation, to her necessities, to her circumstances, to the obligation of thinking about, and providing for mere existence; but at some moments she was silenced by a pleading look she dared not encounter a second time, and at other times, by an entreaty not to enter on any subject of business which might agitate her and retard her recovery. With a delicacy a thousand times more to be dreaded than the most dissimulated language, Rémonville, though ignorant of Bertha's real situation, refrained from any expression of his growing attachment which might have aroused in her a sense of unperformed duty,—while the constant presence of Monsieur and Madame de Chatelain sanctioned that of Rémonville, and left nothing to alarm her purity, though all to enslave her affections.

Country air was ordered to restore Bertha's health, which remained in a very feeble state,

and pleasant lodgings were procured in the vicinity of Windsor Forest, whither their little party removed. At first the sharp winds kept Bertha a prisoner to the house, but towards the end of April an unusually mild spring admitted of her going out; and many morning hours were spent in strolling about the wood, and inhaling that first breath of reviving nature, which seems to give new life alike to all that are mortal and a sensitive being.

The tender verdure of the young grass in particular was piercing; here and there the brown carpet of fallen leaves which the preceding winter had scattered on the ground—an early violet peeping forth its fragrant blossom, the very smell of the earth which at this season seems to give sign of gratulation, was vaguely delicious, and when Bertha breathed renovated health in every morning walk, the following lines came to her recollection.

A FRAUGHTANCE of peculiar power,  
 We even in spring's first genial hour;  
 Who that inhales the rare perfume  
 Of the first violet's opening bloom,



Feels not the grateful odour raise  
 His heart to no ignoble praise,  
 And bids a mental incense rise  
 In mingling essence to the skies ;  
 Nor yet confined to one alone,  
 Though loveliest gem in Flora's throne,  
 On Nature's brow a varied wreath  
 Of varying sweets perpetual breathe.

In Summer's bright meridian hours,  
 When flaunt profuse the garden flowers,  
 When every hedge-row boasts its rose,  
 And prodigally sweetness throws ;  
 Does not the magic fragrance give  
 Rapture to all that feel and live ?  
 Oh ! I have breathed its subtle charm,  
 With hope and youthful fancy warm,  
 And I have owned the mystic power,  
 In riper and in sadder hour,  
 But never has it ceased to be  
 Sweet harbinger of ecstasy.

In Autumn, when is heard no sound,  
 Save a leaf falling to the ground,  
 Or rivulet that trickling clear,  
 Makes lulling sound to fancy dear,  
 When not a sunbeam dares intrude  
 Its ray on Nature's pensive mood,  
 I've often roved 'midst briary brake,  
 And watched the feathery fern leaves shake ;

What time the moorfowl's russet wing,  
 From covert like itself would spring,  
 When timid roebuck ever stood  
 Peeping unscared from forth the wood,  
 When not a breath of air would sweep  
 The glassy surface of the deep,  
 And yet an unfelt zephyr bore  
 The salt scent of the distant shore,  
 Which mingling with the heath flower's bell,  
 Convey'd a wild delicious smell.  
 If fate my wand'ring footsteps lead  
 The Earth's remotest verge to tread,  
 Should the like perfume greet my sense,  
 It would a powerful spell dispense,  
 And call back memory to her throne,  
 To tell of hours and scenes long flown.  
 When Winter comes at length o'er all,  
 Hanging its sombre death-like pall,  
 Refinement has devis'd a way,  
 To cheat the joyless dreary day ;  
 Whilst Summer odours float around,  
 Winter in vain despoils the ground ;  
 Sheltered by art and nursed by taste,  
 See Flora reigns 'mid Nature's waste,  
 And foreign sweets are rear'd to prove  
 That all things thrive with care and love.

One of the favourite haunts of Bertha and Ré-  
 monville was a secluded part of the wood where  
 an excavation, originally formed by a gravel-

pit, but now nearly overgrown with briars and brushwood and fern, afforded one of those confined, yet rich scenes of beauty, where fancy may linger delighted. The brown and plaited leaves of the oak in its first budding state, contrasted beautifully with the bright colour of the young and brilliant hawthorn. There was nothing of grandeur in the scenery, but there is always much of interest in the mystery of a wood,—the contrast of the foliage, the varied character of the branches and barks of trees, even in their leafless state, the minute tracery of their finer fibres, the dancing chequered shade, the gleams of light, all bearing analogy to life and to its passions,—above all, the uncertainty produced by the confined boundary of the objects which crowd together, and prevent the eye from penetrating to distance, combine to charm a mind which is accustomed to court the vague delight of undefined thought. Chateaubriant says, “*Heureusement quand les mystères de la vie finissent, ceux de la mort commencent.*” For Bertha, that softening veil of mystery still existed; yet, soon the time was approaching when it was to be torn asunder; but this me-

lancholy consciousness was yet a little while delayed. One day as Bertha, fatigued by a longer ramble than usual, rested on a bank near their favourite scene, "Observe," said Rémonville, after a short pause, "observe those mossy stones, that decayed paling, those trailing plants which twine so gracefully together, nature surely has combined them in one of her most tasteful moods, and without any of those marked features which raise the thoughts to soar above the earth; a lover of rural scenery might sit for hours together, dreaming on the dream of life; and is it not thus in domestic scenes? A mind not hardened by the world, does not require turbulent emotions and striking incidents to excite its enjoyment; daily occurrences and simple pleasures will vary such a life, with all the fine shades of acute and distinguishing perception, and convey to it the purest thrill of rapture." He pressed Bertha's hand gently—so gently she could not be offended,—it would have been prudery to have noticed it. Bertha only sighed, but making no reply, some moments of silence ensued, and they mu-

tually felt that happiness which is too subtle to be fixed or defined. Bertha beheld those very shades of feeling, which Rémonville had so well described, pass over his countenance, like airy shadows darting through a pure stream.

But not like those innocuous pass,  
Which shoot athwart the liquid glass ;  
For these, with many a heavy trace,  
Stamp rugged lines that ne'er efface.

This scene was no more repeated. Alas ! when does the same moment return precisely as it *has been felt*, and as *it has occurred* ?—Never.

One day glided on after another in quick succession ; the mornings still spent in rambling about the wood, and in the evenings Monsieur de Chatelain read aloud, while Rémonville sketched the scene where the morning had passed ; thus doubling existence, and fixing every pleasure as much as its evanescent nature is capable of being fixed. Bertha's health was now re-established ; but this circumstance, which gave delight to her friends, excited only melancholy in her breast. She felt she could no long-

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er be under self-delusion, and that to protract this life of idleness and indulgence was morally wrong. She determined to break the spell, but yet a few more days elapsed, and still her resolution was unfulfilled.

Rémonville had proposed an excursion to Clifden; every thing had been arranged, and Bertha said mentally, "This one day more, and then." She recollected at a previous epoch of her life having pronounced the same words; they conjured up a painful train of thought, and she passed a sleepless night. When she met her friends the ensuing morning, she was assailed by expressions of the tenderest anxiety. She assured them she was not ill; she tried to banish the seriousness which wrapped her in gloom. It were better, perhaps, never to banish such seriousness. There is a prophetic voice of warning in the breast of every one, previous to taking any decided step in life, which, if not disregarded, would save us from many a pang. But Bertha, lulling conscience asleep, caught the illusion of pleasure which floated before her, in the enjoyment of the present moment. Remem-

brance of the past was forgotten, and reference to the future avoided.

When they reached Clifden, Bertha was enchanted with the tender character of its sylvan scenery. The spring appeared to her like the favourite haunt of Dian and her nymphs; the pureness but darkness of its waters, shaded by high banks of trees, with the Thames rolling its full and quiet stream in front; while the richness of the opposite fields, busily gay with the labours of the husbandman, and vocal with the carols of the lark, lent contrasted grace to the still secrecy of the shadowy water. There was a small summer-house which marred the beauty of the landscape, but a sudden shower obliged Bertha to take refuge under its shelter. Monsieur and Madame de Chatelain had been detained, by meeting some friends at the inn, and Rémonville was once again alone with her; but his presence now failed in lending to the hour that gleam of tranquil delight in which of late she had basked, without daring to define its essence. The hour, the storm, the same peculiar features of the landscape, all combined to con-

jure up images of the past—the more harrowing from having long lain dormant; and a tide of remembrance rushed over her mind, which transformed the smiles on her countenance to an expression of the deepest sadness. Rémonville approached her; his solicitude gave more than its wonted tenderness to his whole demeanour, as taking her hand he uttered some accents of sympathising inquiry. But Bertha seemed not to hear him, as she murmured in a low and rapid tone, “One day more, and then—” Heavy sighs choked her utterance, her head sank on her breast, and she seemed wholly absorbed in some mysterious and agonizing recollection. Then suddenly awakening, as if from a trance, she snatched her hand from that of Rémonville’s, and exclaimed in a tone of inexpressible anguish and terror, “Leave me, Oh! leave me I conjure you, and for ever.”

Astonishment, mortification, and the deepest concern, were depicted on Rémonville’s countenance, as he with difficulty articulated, “If I have been presumptuous, pardon me, it is a fault that shall not again occur.—Have I then deserv-



ed this? but "you shall be obeyed;" and he hastily rushed from her presence.

Bertha remained a prey to contending emotions. "How capricious, how unfeeling, must I appear to him?" thought she. "How must I have wounded his feelings, too, by the seeming unkindness of my behaviour; but, alas! what is the pang which I have inflicted on his heart, to that with which memory wrings mine!" She remained lost in painful recollection, till roused by the return of Rémonville. She did not venture to look at him, but there is an intuitive species of vision that conveys a knowledge of all that is passing, without actually raising our eyes to the object. He met her with a forced tranquillity of demeanour, which, far from allaying the poignancy of her feelings, conveyed the melancholy apprehension, that, by her unaccountable behaviour, she had estranged from her the only friend she now possessed, a friend to whom she owed so much, and for whom she experienced the warmest sentiments of gratitude and esteem.

During his short absence, Rémonville had struggled, and successfully, to regain some com-

mand over his tumultuous feelings. The pride of a generous heart, unjustly wounded, for a moment rose above the pangs of disappointed affection, and he rejoined her with an apparent calmness, which, contrasted with her own agitation, seemed to her that of indifference. Both remained silent, and Bertha's embarrassment every moment increased. Scarcely conscious of what she uttered, she at length stammered out the names of Monsieur and Madame de Chatelain. "Shall I go for them?" asked De Rémonville. "Yes——no——" A mist came before her eyes, various emotions ebbed and flowed at her heart, till, overcome by the conflict of contending feelings, and weak from recent illness, she burst into tears. In a moment Rémonville was at her feet. Wholly thrown off his guard, he implored, in the most tender and earnest manner, to know in what he had offended her. When sufficiently recovered to speak, she urged him to rise, assured him that she had never been offended with him, and accounted for her agitation by referring it to shame for her late weak and inexplicable behaviour, and grief at perceiving that she had there-

by forfeited his esteem. "I feel," said she, "that you must condemn me; to you my manner must have been unaccountable, and must remain unaccounted for." She sighed, and a slight tremor shook her frame as she spoke; then making an effort at composure, she rejoined, "But when I tell you that I condemn myself, will you be appeased? when I ask your forgiveness, will you refuse it?" "My forgiveness!" rejoined Rémonville, reproachfully, and an endearing but sad expression of intellectual pain hovered in every fibre of his touching countenance. "Something," he said, "preys upon your mind, some former anguish recurs, which I cannot, dare not, hope to lighten—Your fate, I see, can never be made by me; yet I might perhaps ameliorate its severity, perhaps relieve you of part of the burden that weighs upon your heart. Do not think me presumptuous, if I entreat to be honoured with your confidence; the interest I have ever taken in all that relates to you, perhaps gives me some title to make this request; you surely know me too well, to suppose that I would abuse the precious deposit." Bertha, influenced by the plead-

ings of Rémonville, by the fulness of her own heart, and by thoughts which longed for the relief of communication, hesitated a few moments, and then replied, "I believe it will afford me much soothing consolation to unburthen my oppressed mind to one who I think is capable of indulgence and sympathy ; but I am not by any means certain, that, in so doing, I may not lose the friend I have gained. The fate of a human being is involved in her conduct ; that conduct is often erroneous, frequently blameable, but not such as to make her wholly unworthy of your esteem ; yet still, if, in yielding to your curiosity, I forfeit any part of your good will, I shall repent having done so, and what can give me the assurance that I shall not ?" "*Your character, my promise,*" quickly rejoined Rémonville. Bertha shook her head mournfully. "May I then hope that you will make me acquainted with the particulars of your fate, and the causes of your grief?" cried the former. "I may be able to alleviate your sorrows ; will you—will you confide in me ?" "Perhaps,——" said Bertha. At that moment Monsieur and Madame de

Chatelain entered, and prevented her from adding more.

When Bertha found herself again in her apartment, at Windsor, she began to reflect upon the conversation she had that day had with Rémonville, and thought, with mixed uneasiness and regret, of the half promise of confidence he had succeeded in extorting from her. The idea of communicating the events of her life to any one filled her with trepidation, and she took from a portfolio a manuscript narration of them, which she had employed her lonely hours in writing, and glanced timidly over its pages, which had been blotted by many a tear. "Shall I unveil my folly, my imprudence, to the only friend I have in the world?" exclaimed she to herself, "and thus, perhaps, eternally forfeit his respect and esteem? I fondly believed that many of my errors carry their palliation along with them, but he, not being blinded by self-love, may think my conduct most degrading and inexcusable."

However, she soon began to perceive that she was bound in honour and duty to make Rémonville acquainted with her situation, to a certain

extent. His behaviour showed too plainly, that his feelings towards her were of a warmer and tenderer nature than those of mere friendship; and Bertha reflected, that, if she any longer concealed that she was a married woman, she would be indirectly guilty of encouraging and fostering a criminal passion, which might eventually destroy the peace of them both. She therefore resolved to put her manuscript into the hands of Rémonville, though she feared that consequences, painful and humiliating to herself, would result from the gratification of his curiosity..

Rémonville thought all that day and night on the "Perhaps" of Bertha. One word excites a thousand thoughts, and sums up ages of joy or misery, of hope or suspense. He knew that Bertha intended returning to London in the course of a few days, along with the Chatelains, so that, if the "Perhaps" were not ripened into certainty during the time she remained at Windsor, he had little hopes that his wishes ever would be gratified.

Next morning, Bertha perceived, by Rémonville's behaviour, that he intended to remind her

of what had passed between them the preceding day. However, she anticipated him in this, and presenting her manuscript, said, "These pages will unfold the history of my life. Read them with indulgence, and know me for what I am, inasmuch as I know myself." Rémonville received it with a degree of emotion, which prevented him from making any reply, and immediately retired to his own apartment, and eagerly commenced its perusal.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The Life of Bertha de Chanci.*

“ I SHALL dwell often upon things that may appear trivial or tedious. I shall write of the moon—of the weather—of the aspect of nature in its different seasons. I will not think what any one else may, or rather might, think of such and such a paragraph, because it is myself I wish to see upon paper—to trace my errors to their source—to be perfectly natural, in short,—is this possible? I will try.

“ My mother died before I was of an age to regret her loss, and my father some months previous to my birth. I have often, in my childhood, when my natal day returned, been called by my aunts, in whose care I was left, to look



at, and weep over a veil of black crape, which was folded round me at the baptismal font, in honour of my father's memory. "Remember," they said, "my dear Bertha, remember the life of man is a path of thorns; gloom and sadness is the lot of all while on their earthly pilgrimage." But, raising your eyes to Heaven, behold there the land of the blessed—the goal you are to strive for. The sorrows of a mortal state resemble this valueless gauze: like it, when free from self-reproach, they cast no shadows on the soul's eternal happiness." Then would my kind aunts, with the anxious love which accompanies all human affections, wipe from my cheeks the tears they had excited to flow, and, kissing me, say, with a shuddering interest, "Yet, may God forbid this mourning veil should be the emblem of your fate." The previous piety of the exhortation was but too often lost to me in the superstitious dread the latter part of it elicited; and I never heard the words fate or destiny pronounced, that I did not attach to them the remembrance of the black veil and tremble.

“ My aunts traced their origin to the ancient Helvetian, and believed firmly, that they were descended from that Julius Alpinus who lived in the middle of the first century of the Christian era. To this pride of ancestry was annexed the greatest individual humility; and if they sometimes confounded an Allwise Providence, working together for good in the end, with that of a fortuitous power termed Fate, it was only that they had not learned those metaphysical distinctions which scepticism or ignorance sometimes avail themselves of; the former to satisfy the pride of reason, the latter to disguise its incapacity. When my good aunts used the word fate, they considered it as designating an attribute of Providence, and made no distinction of meaning when they said, “ *Le bon Dieu dispose de tout;*” or, “ *Tel est le decret du sort.*” The tenderness of their feelings taught them that refinement which their simple habits—the sameness of their mode of living—and the rigid virtue of their morals, might otherwise have rather suppressed than nourished. Although their manners were not modelled on those of a court,

or upon the ephemeral and frivolous rules of *ton*, or of any one circle or set of people, there was a native dignity about them which shone the more conspicuously from being stamped on originality of character. Their establishment—their attire—were frugal; yet there was enough to spare for hospitality; and no traveller, of whatever degree, was ever turned from the door without courtesy, assistance, or accommodation. “Are not all travellers,” said my aunts, “in the road of life, and do we not all, in some way or other, require the aid of charitable donations from the good and the liberal?”

“There were certain seasons of the year when the Dames Alpina de Chanci appeared with unusual pomp. These were, during the time of the vintage, and on the first of May, when the cattle are led from their winter pasture to the mountains. At these epochs they put on all their splendour, and received the homage of their dependants with a kind of innocent pride and rural pageant, which contrasted strangely with the general simplicity of their habits and modes of life. Well do I remember a certain

old square gilt carriage, lined with stamped leather, to which the cart-horses were yoked with the utmost ceremony every Sunday; and although the one was blind, and the other lame, I feel a reflected joy, even now, at that which I experienced when I saw them led forth to this car of triumph.

“ No courser of Arabia’s land ever excited more pleasure or admiration than these daily tillers of the soil conveyed to the simple spectators, from whom they were destined to receive their meed of fame.

“ This occasional indulgence and gratification of vanity did not impair that genuine simplicity of character, which was so truly their own. Indeed, it was the only relief which varied that even tenor of life which either rocks the faculties to lethargic repose, or, acting upon a mind of determined vigour and keen sensibility, gives additional force to the first by opposing its desires, and fresh stimulus to the latter by affording it every species of aliment that it loves to feed upon.

“ I received little or nothing of what is term-

ed education. " I thought before I knew how to read ; and when I read, my reading was of that desultory kind which raised the mind to soar in a vague sublime, but in nowise chastises the imagination, or forms the judgment to the sober relish of real life.

" I had all the intense feelings of love and friendship long before I ever saw any object in which to embody them. And the worship I paid to the images of my fancy was pure and faultless as the ideal beings of my adoration.

" Every circumstance of my life tended to cherish in me this fatal disposition to make a world of my own, and not to make me fit for the world as it is. I loved my aunts with a grateful fondness, and with a reverential admiration of their virtues; but the great difference in age precluded friendship, and nothing filled my affections—those affections, so warm—so fond—so true—which never have, and never can, be filled. 'Friendship is a sentiment which demands perfect equality, and must derive its source from our intellectual faculties. It is a

choice rather than an impulse ; and, in that respect, its character is strikingly different either from the passion of love, or from the intuitive tenderness which arises from the ties of consanguinity.

“ I had no companions of my own age, nor do I recollect ever to have wished for any. I, therefore, never experienced these pleasures of childhood which I have so often heard of, and seen so rapturously described in books as the golden age of man's existence. The remembrance of that period presents nothing to me but melancholy and mortification.

“ The first era from which I can date my existence, since it is the first strong emotion I can recall to my recollection, was one of sorrow ; and let no person say the pangs we experience in childhood are slight, because those circumstances which excite them are generally such. It is now fourteen years ago that one of these trivial instances occurred, which I still remember, and, remembering, feel with a yet vivid sensation of the pang it then occasioned. Like other children, I loved to find birds' nests, but

not, like other children, to plunder or destroy them. There was one, however, which I visited so frequently, that the evil which I did not intend to do, I actually committed. After having been frequently warned in vain, that if I persisted in pulling the branches about, on which the frail tenement depended, I should inevitably destroy it. I at length, one luckless hour, bought my experience dearly, for down fell the mossy fabric with all its unfledged nestlings. What could I do to repair the mischief? Alas! if it is difficult to avoid evil, how much more so to find its remedy! I endeavoured to gather the unfledged birds together, and squeezing them the best way I could, but not that in which nature had delicately placed, into their mutilated habitation, I left them with a heart beating with sorrow and anxiety, longing that the morrow were come in order to know their fate. The morrow came,—of course, the birds were dead. The terms which would express what I felt must necessarily appear ludicrous, when compared to the cause which called forth my sorrow; but it would be fortunate if the self-re-

proach I then experienced lost nothing of its poignancy on more serious occasions in after life. My aunts grieved at the duration of my tears, after a very short lecture on the folly of contemning the advice of those older and wiser than ourselves, ended by saying, "There, that is enough ; 'tis only, after all, an accident ; weep no more, accidents will happen." But I did not deceive myself.—"No," I said, "this is no accident,—I did it myself ; I must weep."

"The next epoch in my life was one also of sorrow. This grief consisted in being obliged to part from a woman who occasionally attended me, and who was a servant in the house. I loved this person passionately. What did I love with any measure of fondness ? She had not the best moral character in the world ; but she recited psalms with the same enthusiasm with which she sung love ditties, and I took pleasure in learning both. I never slept without repeating that psalm, "He is about my path, and about my bed, and spieth out all my ways." And although at my first acquaintance with this beautiful and sublime composition, I



felt a mysterious dread, as if I actually expected the appearance of some invisible being; yet it was the greatest possible gratification to me to excite this tremor, and by degrees it gave place to a perfect security and confidence, and I firmly believed, that angels, such as I had figured them to myself, with blue eyes and purple wings, hovered round my couch to guard and to protect me. Blessed purity of pristine feeling, for the absence of which all the sober acquirements of riper years cannot compensate!

“ The woman who first aroused and fostered in me these sparks of enthusiasm, which have since so fatally biased my existence, was possessed by an ungovernable temper. Sometimes she procured for me injudicious indulgencies unknown to and unsanctioned by my aunts; at others, she would vent her ill humour by actual blows, without my exciting her to such violence by any provocation. I took as much care to conceal this ill-treatment, as if my interest depended on such concealment. I devoured my tears and grief in silence,—tears that flowed much more from wretchedness at her unkindness, than from

the personal inconvenience or indignity I suffered. How often, while my heart swelled with agony, have I cried myself to sleep, after one of these unprovoked fits of fury, and have I vowed, that, as soon as I was my own mistress, I would seek out Fanchon, were she at the world's end, in order to unite her to my service for ever.

“ Dreams of disinterested and devoted tenderness, where are ye? The world and its ways have caused ye to evaporate like the dews of early morning, and all that remains of reality is not worth one of those pure and unsophisticated feelings which no suspicion rouses, and of which no knowledge of evil sullies the bright purity.

“ As time went on my pleasures expanded, and became more vivid, but never changed their nature; the sole difference in my mode of life was, that the limited and regular hours of my childhood were exchanged for the liberty of wandering whither I would, and at what hours I chose. With this enjoyment of liberty came that pleasurable feeling of existence which suffices to itself alone.

“ There is a moment in life when nothing is

wanted of all that is necessary to happiness in riper years ; nor books, nor science, nor fine arts, nor hardly friends.—It is certainly an animal pleasure of existence, but it must be confessed it is happiness, pleasures seem to be enthroned on every object that surrounds us. Like the first gorgeous beauty of a forward spring, all is perfume and blossoms, and man, inebriated with delight, owns the general influence ; every thing is enjoyed—nothing is discriminated ; but ask the duration of this evanescent happiness. Behold the lightning which precedes a stormy night. Such, and so transient is its reign, and long and gloomy is the darkness which succeeds.

“ To me this instant was short indeed. I felt the vacuum of human life sooner than most persons. I felt that want to become something which would make my memory live after me in this world, and my soul deserving of a better. Yet had I no fixed principle of action, no steady object to lead and guide me to so great an end.

“ To sail upon a stormy sea in life,—to buffet with the tempests of mortal existence,—to

snatch one wreath from fame—these were the wishes that fired my heart with restless desire to be in action, to perform more duties than one of common virtue could enact,—to ascend a higher path in knowledge than one of meaner intellect would dare to dream of. This was my prayer. How far the prayer has been granted, the sequel of this narrative will prove.

## CHAPTER IX.

O days of enchanting delusion,  
How sweet a remembrance you've left,  
The glow of so chaste an illusion  
Can ne'er from my bosom be reft.

As when in the hallowed pile,  
The censer its odours has cast,  
The fragrance still floats through each aisle,  
Unchanged, though the worship be past.

LORD M.

“ I HAVE frequently wandered for hours together in a large wood of pines that rose behind our dwelling, merely to listen to the murmuring of the boughs, which, shaken by the wind, now gently, then moving in quicker motion, appeared to my imagination like the ærial converse of some immaterial beings. I believe all persons of sensibility are in some degree endowed with that creative power of imagination, which ren-

ders them at once a painter, a poet, a musician, even when ignorant of all the rules of art. The execution is little in comparison of that mental conception of works of genius in which their greatest charm consists; others, indeed, do not taste these viewless operations of our fancy, but to the individual they are inexhaustible sources of exquisite enjoyment.

“How often have I, in imagination, traced the most beautiful landscapes, which, when I actually endeavoured to place them on paper, eluded my power, and yet I returned to the attempt with a delight and a persuasion of success, which always afforded me fresh pleasure in the pursuit. When this was denied to my pencil, I found, in the sound of my voice, a relief to my feelings, and tasted in music that fleeting, but indefinable rapture, which an expression of our sentiments by any mode or vehicle, so bounteously bestows, but by music more vividly, perhaps, than by any other. Still all this did not suffice me. I wanted to fix, to embody my thoughts, to clothe my feelings in some durable and visible form, which might impart

them to others, and give them to my own senses again, precisely as they had been felt by me in their first glowing birth. I then flew to poetry, and to the inexpressible charm of pouring forth, in written words, the ebullitions of an overflowing mind.

“ Thus glided away the first eighteen years of my life. One evening, after having wandered a longer time than usual, in my favourite wood, I sat down on my usual seat, and, leaning my head on my hand, I had remained sometime in that attitude, when I was aroused from my reverie by the sound of footsteps close to me. I looked up and beheld, not an ideal form, but a young man, who, from the beauty of his person, might, by less romantic heads than mine, have been deemed such. I arose involuntarily, with a kind of mingled sentiment of admiration and respect. There was something inexpressibly commanding in the figure that stood before me. I hesitated, was silent, and awaited to be addressed. The stranger relieved my embarrassment by apologizing for having started me. He said, that, surprised at seeing a female figure

in that solitude, whose attitude made him conceive her to be ill, or in distress, he had been induced to intrude upon her, in order to offer any assistance in his power. "I have the pleasure," he added, "of seeing by your healthful countenance, that no indisposition can at present affect you, while the joyous expression of youthful spirits informs me no sorrow has ever made inroad on your heart. I again apologize, therefore, for this intrusion;" and having thus spoken, he bowed and passed on.

"It is difficult to describe the various emotions that passed through my mind with such rapidity, that they seemed all to be thought at once. I was mortified that it was supposed I had never been unhappy,—that had argued a want of soul in my character;—that I should look so robust and healthy, also, there was nothing interesting in that either. I had seldom seen any men but the curate of our parish, and a Banneret de Manvert, a distant relation of my aunts, and his son, whom they destined to be my future husband,—in comparison with these, the stranger seemed a demi-god. He had



a foreign air and accent, which gave him a sort of mysterious interest in my estimation. I walked hastily home to relate my wonderful adventure, for such it appeared to me; but on the road, I had conjured up such strange and romantic circumstances, which existed only in my fancy, that, by the time I was in my aunts presence, I was so out of breath, I could not articulate one word. My aunt Lolla was knitting, my aunt Alpha spinning, their favourite cat sitting between them as demure as they, licking its paws, and purring in contented tranquillity. In my present disposition of mind, there was something indescribably provoking in the quiet drowsiness of the beings around me, as well as in their employments.—Everything within my fancy was fraught with importance, with events of I knew not what, and expectations I could not define,—whereas, every object, animate and inanimate, that met my view, looked as if it were at the acme of all it ever could, should, or would be. I wished to be asked questions, but I could not, unquestioned, pronounce those simple words, “I have seen a stranger;” I conti-

nued waiting, with breathless expectation, for one of my aunts to speak, in vain. At length one of them said, "Bertha, my queen, take your Bible, and read us your evening chapter." I did as I was ordered, and turned over the leaves, but could not, for some time, find the place. When I did, I was still so out of breath I could not read plain. "You have walked too far, my love—rest yourself;" said my aunt Lolla, and putting her spectacles on, she stared at me. I was conscious of an uneasy feeling, I knew not why, and wished the scrutiny over; a feeling, too, of dismay, at being rather averse to perform the sacred evening duty, one which I had hitherto ever felt pleased and eager to fulfil, made me blush for myself. Making an effort, therefore, to conquer the flurry of my spirits, and to recal my thoughts, I mastered my voice, and read apparently as I was wont to read, but it was not really the same. When I closed the book, I talked hastily, and without knowing what I should say next, jumbling all things together. I spoke of the cat, of the great washing that was to take place the ensuing

week—the salting of the butter, and the gathering of the walnuts, and of what neighbours should be requested to come and assist us in the latter labour. And here I stopped, for I thought of the stranger. “I wish,” I said. “What do you wish, my love?” “Why, I wish we could see somebody besides the curate and the Banneret, and Monsieur Jean Francois. Indeed, the latter dances so ill, I had infinitely rather dance with our Claudine.” My aunts both paused from their occupations for a moment, looked at me, then at each other. Rumble, rumble, rumble, went the eternal spinning-wheel, and tic-a-tic, tic-a-tic, replied the knitting needles. The cat continued to lick his paws with the same provoking gravity as before. Not another sound was heard, and for the first time in my life, I felt a sensation of spleen and pettishness against my dear, my worthy relations, and disaffection at my lot. “Well, then,” I thought with childish peevishness, “since they will not speak to me, they shall not know my news. I will not tell them what I have seen;” as if they would have been interested in the sight or the

relation of it. Having thus revenged myself, I took my pencils and began to draw, without knowing what I was about; I sketched an incorrect figure, but one which resembled the air and lofty carriage of the stranger. While I was thus engaged, my aunts were conversing upon the return which their vintage had made them, the preceding year, what promise that of the present afforded, and other useful matters of the same sort. "Ah!" said my aunt Lolla, suddenly taking up my drawing, when I least expected it: "what have we here? A bunch of grapes doubtless." Then lowering her spectacles from her forehead to her nose; "as I shall declare, a man's figure." Then handing the paper to my aunt Alpina, "Look there,—why child," with a voice of astonishment, "who taught you to draw figures? I did not know you could draw any figure save that of Melissa, our beautiful cat. I am all astonishment; it is very strange," continued the good old lady. "I will tell you what, Bertha, my queen, since you have a turn for figures, you should draw the patriarchs, or some holy men of that kind, for I

do not approve of young ladies making foolish fanciful figures, and I am sure our good pastor would not approve of it either." So saying, she very deliberately tore my drawing in a thousand pieces. I cannot express what I felt of vexation, but I said nothing, and shortly after, we retired for the night.

"Never before was I so happy to be alone; a new world had started up to my view, or rather, the one in which I did exist was completely changed; a momentary glance had effected all this in my imagination. Alas! how dangerous a gift is imagination, when uncontrolled by reason! when unsubdued by religion!

"I have already acknowledged, that I was not wholly free from a certain degree of superstition, the consequence, probably, of the early impressions received in my childhood, strengthened by my secluded education, and confirmed by my own peculiar disposition. It was not therefore wonderful, that my nightly slumbers should receive a tinge from the fanciful day-dreams in which it was my delight to indulge. Yet—shall I own my weakness?—Even now,

when I recal the beautiful but mournful vision, which, with all the vividness and distinctness of reality, impressed itself on my mind that night—even now, I cannot withhold my belief, that coming events do indeed cast their shadows before ; but woe to the eyes which cannot discern those shadows, woe to the heart which cannot retain them ! Yes, that vision *was* fraught with warning—Alas ! how fully has it been realized !

“When I awoke the following morning, scarcely could I believe that the scene which had passed over my fancy was indeed a vision of the night. When convinced that it was so, I hastened to embody it, as it were, lest it should fade from my recollection ; and the following lines flowed so spontaneously from my pen, that I believe I had actually dreamt the whole as it now stands.

LAST night, as soundly I was sleeping,  
 Each waking sense in rest lay steeping ;  
 But yet some power that never slumbers,  
 And e'en the hours of silence numbers,  
 Presented to my fancy's eye  
 Shadows that seemed reality :

Tell me then, dread power unknown,  
 That makest the half of life thine own,  
 What portents have thy curious seeming ?  
 Are they with good or evil teeming ?  
 Show me the substance of the shade,  
 Which, though I wake, yet does not fade ?

Methought a persecuted dove,  
 With plumage soiled and wings distended ;  
 In plight the hardest heart to move,  
 For, ah ! its life seemed nearly ended,

Fell on my breast, and as it fell  
 I raised my eyes, and saw pursuing  
 A wanton boy, who, sooth to tell,  
 Knew not the harm that he was doing.

Scarce had the bird lit on my breast,  
 When lo ! another piteous sight,  
 A lamb alike pursued, distressed,  
 Sought refuge from a foe in flight.

The lamb, methought, I could not save,  
 So turned my head in grief aside ;  
 But the dove's life I earnest crave,  
 And beg it may with me abide.

My prayer obtained, I haste away  
 Triumphant, with my timorous prize ;  
 When lo ! I wake,—the beam of day  
 Scarce melts the vision from mine eyes.

Tell me of this dark dream the meaning,  
What is the lamb and what the dove ?  
In mystic lore, my scanty gleanings,  
Says, *that* is peace and *this* is love !

But must I then consent to lose  
That without which bliss itself is lost ?  
Ah ! if I must between them choose,  
Peace without love were better lost.



## CHAPTER X.

"I FAILED not, when evening returned, to go as usual to the wood, but no stranger appeared. The next day and the next passed in like manner; on the third, which was Sunday, in going to church, as we turned up a narrow and rather steep acclivity that led to the church door, one of the horses stumbled and fell. The old driver in vain attempted to arrest the carriage in its descent. The heavy old carriage backed down the hill, and we were in considerable alarm, if not in danger, when a person, who proved to be the stranger, leaping from behind some bushes that concealed the foot-path from us, turned the other horse in such a way, as to jolt the wheel into a rut, and fasten the carriage. Having thus extricated us from our terror, he assisted my aunts out, aided the driver in restoring the equipage, or rather

the harness, to its original state, and having seen us in safety, waited not to be thanked, but disappeared with as much precipitancy as when he darted forward to our assistance. "Where is that angel?" said les Dames de Chanci. "We must know who he is; where can he reside, and who can he be?" "And such a handsome man, too," said my aunt Lolla. "Why, Bertha, you do not say a word, child, you are stupified with fear; why, you did not thank our preserver." "Oh yes, I did; only you did not hear me." The rest of the day was spent in inquiring for the stranger. Who was he? whence came he? No one knew. The people said it must be some peasant from the Valais, who had passed on his road to another part of the country, for the vintage. "A peasant?" returned my aunt Lolla, "I should rather say a king."

"This little incident kept alive in me that spirit of interest and romance, which the first appearance of the stranger had excited in my mind, and shortly after, another occurrence kindled my imagination into a dangerous flame.

"One very tempestuous night, we had retir-

ed at our usual early hour, and had been asleep sometime, when a pretty loud and repeated knocking awoke me; and presently Claudine, the maid, entered my room. "Rise, Mademoiselle," cried she, "rise quickly; here is a wounded gentleman, brought hither by Manneron; his house has been on fire, and in trying to save one of the children, this poor stranger, who it seems was lodging there, has got one of his arms sadly scorched, and he has come here to beg a night's quarters for him. O if we could but find your aunt Lolla's balsam, without disturbing the dear ladies at this time of night!" At Claudine's first summons, I had hastily sprung up, and quickly dressing myself, while she bustled about for the remedies, I repaired to the hall, where I found the stranger—*my* stranger, supported by the old peasant. He was pale as death, and the contraction of his features denoted the intensity of his sufferings. On my entrance, he attempted to apologize for the intrusion he had been guilty of, but a few almost inarticulate words were all he could utter. "Ah Mademoiselle, I have brought you an angel," cried old Manneron,

“but for him, my Jeanette must have perished ; but see what he has suffered ;” and the old man burst into tears, as he pointed to the stranger’s arm ; “and yet he thinks nothing of his own misfortune, and I could hardly persuade him to come here to procure the necessary remedies. Oh ! Mademoiselle, had you seen him rush into the heart of the flames, and then, when we all gave him up for lost, appear with my baby wrapt in his cloak—” Here the old man’s voice failed him, and he fell on his knees before his preserver, as he called the stranger, who had sunk back exhausted, and seemed almost insensible to what was passing. What a scene ! what a field was here for one of my ardent enthusiastic nature ! Already I had in my own imagination invested this mortal with every attribute of virtue. Noble, disinterested, tender, humane, what a bright image of excellence was in a moment impressed upon my heart ! In one splendid act, I had concentrated every human perfection—fatal error of youth and enthusiasm ! So great was my emotion, that I could scarcely give the necessary directions for assisting the

stranger to the parlour, where he was laid upon a sofa, and Claudine having bound up his arm, and persuaded him to swallow some cordial, I hastened to awake my aunts, and receive their instructions as to what was next to be done. It was sometime ere the good old ladies could collect their senses sufficiently to comprehend my story; but when they did, they commended what I had already done, and desired that the best bed-room might instantly be prepared. “And we will rise and do the honours of the mansion to him;” said they. “So brave and worthy a man is entitled to all the respect and attention we can pay him. Bertha, my queen, look in the third drawer,—not that one, my child, the one above,—for my cambric hood with the Valenciennes edging. Don’t tumble things, my love, in that careless manner;—and, bless me, Bertha, what an opinion must the stranger have of you! Why, you are in your wrapper, I protest, and your hair all about your ears. Go, my dear, to your room, and adjust your dress a little, and send Claudine to assist us. Or stay—perhaps it would be as well that

she made ready the apartment for the poor gentleman first." "Aware that my aunts would only fatigue themselves and their guest, by this unnecessary piece of attention, I persuaded them to lie still, and leave it to Claudine and me to arrange every thing for the stranger. "Take the keys then, Bertha, love, and show yourself a hospitable landlady," said aunt Alpina, pointing to her massive bunch; "and then make haste back, and tell us all about him."

"Waiting for no farther orders, I ran to adjust and add to my dress, then obeyed the order I had received, by literally flying down stairs. I assured the stranger, my aunts were happy to have it in their power to be of any service to him. He thanked me, and accepted my offer of waiting in the parlour till a room could be prepared for him. His demeanour was courteous, but there was a lofty reserve in his manner, which was very contrary to what I naturally liked, but which, in him, appeared an additional charm. After we had sat a moment or two in silence, I began to feel an awkwardness, which, at first, I was not conscious of. The increas-

ing storm, however, afforded me a topic of conversation, and I opened one of the shutters to gaze at the beautiful effect of the lightning as it partially illuminated the lake, while the rest of the scenery was clothed in denser gloom. The stranger looked at me for a moment, as if surprised at my composure, but contented himself with remarking, "You are accustomed, I conclude, Mademoiselle, to these furious tempests, or you could hardly bear the sight of those livid fires unappalled;" then added, "but I fear I detain you. I pray you take no farther trouble on my account. I beg my grateful acknowledgments to les Dames de Chanci, and regret that I should have alarmed them, and disturbed you, Mademoiselle, by my intrusion." I endeavoured to relieve his apprehensions on that score, by earnest assurances of the pleasure it always afforded my aunts to be of use to the unfortunate. He sighed deeply as I spoke, and closing his eyes as if to concentrate his thoughts wholly within himself, he remained silent and seemingly absorbed in painful reflection. His countenance was pale rather than sallow, but

the features fine, and the whole air and demeanour of the man, that of a hero of romance. He once, and only once, lifted his dark and glittering eyes on my countenance. There was a wildness in the expression, which made me shrink within myself, from a terror I could not account for. Hastily curtesying as Claudine entered, I wished him good night, and retired to my aunts, who were all curiosity, and asked a thousand questions both at once. "Was he much hurt? was it his right arm or his left? was it near the shoulder or the wrist, or all the way down? What was he like when he was seen in a room and near, and what did he say of the fire? Whose house had he lodged in? How much of it had been consumed?" To all of which I could, of course, give no answer; but I related precisely what had passed. "Very strange, indeed, that he should not tell about the conflagration, and how it happened. I fear the poor young man is much hurt; but we shall hear all about it to-morrow—so good night, my love; go to rest—sleep well." I, too, could have asked questions, for my heart and head



were both full of curiosity to know more of our guest. No sooner was I alone, than I flew to my looking-glass, and examining my person, I wondered how I could have appeared before a stranger in so unbecoming a dress. I had never thought much about my appearance before, and in this first examination, I felt mortified at the result. Dissatisfied with myself, I went hastily to bed, and soon forgot my chagrin in sleep.

“The next morning, I arose very early: never before had I made such an elaborate toilette, and better pleased with my own appearance than on the preceding evening, I proceeded, in all the flutter of self-satisfaction, and with a mingled hope and fear of some indefinite object, to my aunts’ room. They had already heard from Claudine, that the stranger was better, and would wait upon them in the parlour, when dressed. “Bless me,” said they, “what a superabundance of pink ribbons, and what an enormous large hat, my dear child; why we never saw you so decked out before. Where did you get that hat? When we were young, our wise laws were rigidly enforced, and ad-

mitted nope of these fancies and vagaries. Ah ! those were better times ; but, however, sweet Bertha, you are a good girl ; and, at your age," added my aunt Lolla, " a little vanity is pardonable." That dear one had always an emollient at hand to soften the severity of a reproof. " Come, my love, we must go to look at our *traille*, and before we do the honour of the house to the stranger, it is necessary to cast a look at the *vigneron*; for there is nothing like the eye of a master. Remember that, my queen ; you must never fail to see yourself into your affairs, or they will go wrong." By the time this little exordium was uttered, we had descended the stairs, and crossed the little garden which opened into the vineyard. My two aunts leaning on my arms, the one with her ivory-headed cane, the other with her basket, which contained grain for the birds, and some remains of the preceding day's repast for her various pensioners. " Turn out that dog," said La Dame Alpina to Claudine, " it is not our dog."—" Poor animal," said my aunt Lolla, flinging a piece of meat after the stone with which Claudine had

dismissed it. “ My dear sister, you should only feed the brutes with the crumbs that fall from the table ; what will you have to give now to the little Nannine ? ” — “ Very true, my dear sister, but then the stone touched the poor creature and made it scream. ” — “ I could not help it. ” — “ Nonsense, ” said the other sister ; but I loved her the better for such nonsense.

“ It was one of those fine September days, when autumn, like a friend who is loth to part, seems lingering fondly to take a last farewell. There was a mild and pensive cast upon the face of nature that accorded with this sentiment, and one broad tint of silver grey wrapped every object in a uniform colouring, that was peculiarly adapted to soothe and tranquillize the mind. My good aunts, whose whole lives resembled this placid scene, were peculiarly sensible to its influence ; they looked round on their domains with a pleased and satisfied eye ; they saw the trees they had planted yielding them shelter and shade, — the fields they had cultivated returning them abundant increase, — the peasantry they had instructed, — the poor whom

they had supported and enriched, enriching them in their turn by the labour of that willing industry which gives a tenfold return. They saw all these things, and felt that real blessing of an approving conscience, which such a life, so spent, fails not to bestow. They did not say or wish, would we had this or that possession more than we have, but, in the plenitude of their grateful hearts, exclaimed, "Thanks be to Heaven for this abundance of happiness; it is more than we deserve. Truly our lot is cast in pleasant places. May you, my child, enjoy the same felicity, and may these lands unalienated pass on to your children's children." There is something beautiful and touching in the full and rich content which crowns the moderate desires of the humble grateful soul. It is a symbol of the peace of Heaven. I embraced my good aunts, and partook of their innocent enjoyment. The stranger was forgotten, and the restless desires of my erring imagination were lost in the natural and real delight of homefelt joys. The moment was short; for an instant after our newly arrived guest came towards us with his

arm in a sling. He thanked my aunts and me in the warmest and most graceful manner for our hospitality; made light of the hurt he had received, which he declared no longer left him an excuse for intruding upon our kindness, and would have taken leave of us immediately, had they not insisted on his remaining, in a manner which it was impossible to refuse. Indeed, even while he spoke his looks belied his words, for he looked pale and ill, and his countenance was expressive of severe suffering, which he naturally imputed to bodily indisposition. As we walked towards the house, my aunts asked him many questions, some of which he evaded, and this was all we learned of his story or his situation. He was an Italian travelling for his entertainment; that, delighted with the simplicity of Swiss manners, with the wild loneliness of Swiss scenery, so unlike that of more luxurious countries, where the hand of man is more visible than that of the Creator, he had determined upon passing some time amid its solitudes, without seeking for the gaities of society, or the bustle of crowded cities. In order to

prosecute this plan, he had chosen to reside in a peasant's house that was situated high up on the hill's side, and there he had already lived for some weeks, when last night the fire broke out that had destroyed their dwelling, and made him seek elsewhere for shelter. He named the farmer Manneron, and scarcely finished speaking, when some ragged children, amongst whom we quickly recognised the little Nannine, my aunt's pensioner, came running towards us, and falling on their knees, blessed him as their guardian angel, said, their father also would have come, but he was so ill he could not. "Poor little thing," said the stranger, lifting the youngest babe, who could hardly speak plain, "poor little thing, I saved you last night from the flames,—perhaps I rendered you no service," he added in a lower and hollower tone of voice, setting the child down again. "What does he say?" said my aunts, who were a little deaf. The child replied, "Oh, he is an angel; he not only saved my sister from being burnt, but has given us money enough to buy another house, and feed and clothe us for ever.—" Go,

my poor things," said he, "go to your father Manneron, I will see him some time to-day, but leave me now."

"My aunts lifted up their hands and eyes in astonishment and admiration. I felt not less than they did, but I felt in silence. The children were dismissed, but not without difficulty. The stranger bowed and walked away ; and shortly after the different and regular avocations of the family dispersed us to our several stations.

## CHAPTER XI.

“ I FOUND it no easy task to recal my mind from any, save one, contemplation ; and I strolled out, after my domestic tasks were indolently fulfilled, not well knowing whither, when I found my footsteps leading me to my accustomed haunt. There was a rivulet that wound through the wood, which had all that character of stillness and purity so well adapted to lead the fancy into pleasing reverie. On its margin grew the greatest variety of beautiful mosses ; and here and there the delicate little blue flower, whose cerulean hue has obtained for it the heavenly name Forget me Not, enamelled the edges of the water, whose murmur was scarcely heard when it passed through the deepest part of its channel—at others, catching the lights



through the branches of the overhanging trees, it sparkled as its swift and unimpeded current rushed over a pebbled bed. I laid myself down by the streamlet, and read in it a similitude to life. This water, so silent—so obscured in its course—is, perhaps, an emblem of my destiny. The thought depressed me. “If, at least,” I said, “some one being were to command—to preside over that destiny—examine the qualities of my mind—as I now examine the texture of these flowers and mosses, they might find some beauties, though humble and unknown, to reward their research; and I should not be insensible to, or unworthy of, their trouble or approbation. Then I blushed at my own vanity, but again relapsed into a reverie of half formed wishes. “Yes,” I said, “were I thus fortunate—could I only engage one heart of price, I should then rather resemble this sparkling part of the current, where its waters meet the blessed joyous eye of day, and rejoicing in the beam, dance buoyant, and reflect its brightness.” As I spoke, something more than the brightness of the stream glittered beneath the rippling

water. I looked more attentively, and, reaching forth my hand, soon attained the object which excited my curiosity. It proved to be a ring ornamented with diamonds. It was of peculiar form and workmanship; and in the inside of the gold which circled the finger were some characters, of which I tried in vain to decypher the meaning. They were not German, or French, or Italian. Who could have dropped such a jewel in this retired spot? Immediately I thought of the stranger, and felt sure the ring belonged to him. I turned it in every possible light, and examined it in every direction, as if it could have informed me of all I wished to know.. At least, I thought it is fortunate that I should have found it; for I shall have the pleasure of restoring it to its owner, who, doubtless, will be very grateful to me, as he obtained it, in all probability, from some one dear to him. Thus did I make a history in a moment out of nothing, and erect a mighty fabric on a mere fancy. In my way home, I stopped, and, again examining my new found treasure, I thought—yet how foolish I shall look should

his jewel not be the stranger's—as if no other person in the world could have possessed and lost a ring but him. I was farther confirmed in this new belief by reflecting, that, were it indeed his, the motto would probably have been written in Italian. This was a luminous thought; it satisfied a latent wish which had just arisen to retain the ring myself; and, at the same moment, I saw Claudine running hastily towards me, and bawling out my name as loud as she could scream. “What is the matter?” I cried as soon as I could be heard; “Where is our guest?” “I know nothing about him, Mademoiselle. What I am come to you for is to say, that your aunts have received a letter, and want to see you immediately.” “Oh, I suppose he is gone then?” “I don't know, indeed, Mademoiselle.” “You never know any thing,” said I, and hurried on. When I came to my aunts they told me, in their usual composed manner, “My dear, the Banneret, his son and daughter, and his niece, who is just returned from Paris, are coming here this evening. You must prepare to receive them as you

ought to do. And there being another person in the house, gives our Claudine a considerable deal of additional trouble. You ought, therefore, to be in the way, love, to assist her.” “The Banneret,” I exclaimed, “and is that all? or rather it is not all, as that tiresome son of his, Jean Francois, is coming also.” “For shame, Bertha, my love, the Banneret’s family are excellent worthy people.” “Excellent,” I repeated pettishly; “but I’ am tired of them.” “Tired of them—tired of the Banneret—of his daughter, and of that good young man Jean Francois?—Impossible.” “My dear aunts, I assure you it is very possible, and very true.” “How can you talk so, my precious Bertha; what has put you so out of humour? Well, for eighteen years that we have brought you up, we have never seen you so wayward before.” I was ashamed of myself, and tears of self humiliation stood in my eyes, when the charabanc was heard, and down went my aunts to meet their visitors. While they stood at the door waiting to receive the latter, I peeped out of the window, and what was my increased disappointment at

beholding, not the niece whom I had expected to see, but a very pretty woman, dressed with the utmost elegance, and gay with all the airs of conscious superiority. To behold her, and to think, ah ! she will of course make a conquest of the stranger, were one and the same thing. Jean Francois, with more of important consequential bustle about him than ever, in his hurry to hand her out of the carriage, entangled his foot in her dress, and tore away part of her trimming. But this accident seemed in nowise to trench upon her good humour,—a circumstance my aunts dwelt upon afterwards with what appeared to me to be a tedious commendation of a trifle. The Banneret, after enjoying our surprise at sight of a stranger, and applauding the success of his stratagem, in having led us to expect our old acquaintance, Annette Manvert, introduced Mademoiselle de Féronce as a distant relation of his late wife's, who had come from Paris on purpose to pay him a visit. And Mademoiselle de Féronce was curtesying and smiling, and embracing us on both sides of the cheeks, while Jean Fran-

logies. I wished to find fault with Mademoiselle de Féronce's dress, or person, or address, but in spite of myself I was forced to confess that I admired the one and envied the other. Monsieur de Manvert talked, as usual, on every subject. He was one of those fortunate beings who have the faculty of seeing every thing *couleur de rose*. He had lost a wife whom he loved as much as he could love any thing, and, shortly after, a great part of his fortune was sunk in idle speculation. But he took the one and the other event with his usual philosophy; and shedding some tears on the first occasion, on the latter he sang *La fari don don, La fari don daine*. Happy would it have been for his daughter if she had inherited her father's levity; but sorrow found in her a willing victim, and she cherished a grief which was slowly, but gently, leading her to another existence. Her story was too simple to excite much general interest, and too well known in the village and not to have been talked over and forgotten. The person to whom she was to have been married died on the day fixed for their nuptials. Two years had passed away and withered her

bloom, but not lessened the deep and silent sorrow that was gradually conducting her to him she wished to follow.

“ Jean François de Manvert, the excellent young man, was a tall, lean, raw-boned youth, with sandy hair, and a pea-green coat. He was destined to inherit the consequence and rank of his father the Banneret; and my aunts had long looked upon him as the man they were anxious should bless me with all these; and his own incomparable self into the bargain. I do not believe he would have made any objection; and his father saw in the union certain comfortable arrangements respecting contiguity of vineyards and orchards, &c. which at once determined his approbation and consent. Hitherto my youth, and the coldness of my manner, bordering on aversion, had kept the dreaded declaration at a distance. But this day a certain de pous self-satisfaction in the father, and a pre than usually wide grin of complacent security in the son, made me dread lest the conclusion of the event were even fixed on to take place that very *now*. Whenever they came near me I actually trembled lest, at the same

time, the stranger should enter the room, and conceive the affair was settled. Thus it is that we imagine persons busy themselves in our concerns, who are not thinking about us. We were sitting in a circle, and I had placed myself between Mademoiselle de Féronce and Esther Manvert, but my aunts contrived, very guardedly as they imagined, to call the latter to them, and winked at the same time to Jean Francois. He flew immediately into the seat, which his sister had just quitted. "Ah! Ah! I have gained by the move," said he; "and they must be clever who cheat me out of this place again." I felt myself colour with vexation. I was sure that at that very moment the stranger would enter. In fact, the door opened. I dared not lift my eyes. I hardly dared to breathe. It was only the servant to announce dinner. "Where is our guest—where is the stranger?" inquired my aunts. "Who do you expect?" was the question that was naturally suggested to the Banneret and his family by the inquiry—This produced an explication, and a full description of all that was known and was not



known concerning the mysterious person. "But go, my Bertha," continued my aunts, "desire Claudine to knock at his door, and say we wait dinner for him." I attempted vainly to obey, for the officious Jean Francois made all kinds of facetious jests, as he conceived them to be—vowed he would have at least an hostage for my return, and struggling for a knot of ribbons that tied up my hair, and had fallen off. He placed the trophy in the button-hole of his pea-green coat. This to me was inexpressibly painful. The scene was interrupted by a message from the stranger, making an apology for being obliged to decline attending the dinner: I was relieved at the moment by this message, although it disappointed me in one of those early wishes and expectations, where a trifle seems to regulate the pulse of life. As soon as we were all seated regularly at the table, every thing seemed flat and melancholy. The Baneret's good stories were every one repeated with their never-failing effect. Dissertations upon fashions, dress, and Paris, pronounced in a dictatorial tone by Mademoiselle de Féronce, ap-

peared insupportably trivial. I had not acquired any of those fictitious tastes with which mixing in the world inspires most females, even those the least imbued with personal vanity. My days had been passed, as I have described, alone with my own imaginations, in scenes of nature most calculated to give them force; and the discourse I now heard, interlarded with all the phrases of the then existing fashionable jargon, were to me insipid, vapid, tasteless. But when I endeavoured to converse with Jean Francois, his inuendos, and compliments, and self-satisfaction, were decidedly more disgusting than ever. I thought, sure never person was so unfortunate in point of society as myself. But I have since learned, that it is very seldom any thing is uttered in mixed company which can be listened to,—nothing that gives impulse to intellect—that awakens fancy, or enlivens enjoyment. And still more rarely does it happen, that, in all the minor enjoyments of daily life, we ever live with those who feel and enjoy ~~them~~ in the mode and measure that men do. Our dinner ended as it had begun—we walked out in the same order as we had walked in. “Go,

my dear young people," said my aunts; "go and amuse yourselves, while we talk over our old stories with our good friend the Banneret." I knew very well that this meant in other words, we are going to talk over, for the hundredth time, my intended alliance with Jean Francois. "Aye, my dear Mademoiselle, do let us sing our duetts together," said Jean Francois. I positively refused. "Nay, you are very cross to me to-night; but I know," he said, in an audible whisper, "that is only because Mademoiselle de Féronce is here, and you are ashamed, so I am not angry. The moment you are well acquainted with her, however, you will be no more afraid of her than I am." The latter part of his speech was made quite loud, and he summed it up by an appeal to the lady. "Will she, Mademoiselle? so do, Bertha, do sing with me," touching me with his elbow. "Oh," cried Mademoiselle de Féronce, "I am sure Mademoiselle de Chanci will not refuse me the exquisite pleasure of hearing you sing—a pleasure of which I anticipate the full charm by the specimens you have given me in the carriage?"

“Now, Mademoiselle Bertha, you will not after that refuse, at least to accompany me.” The instrument was one of those old harpsicords which make more rattle than sound; and when Sophie de Féronce said, on touching the keys, “A charming accompaniment this,” I thought there was something more unamiable in the grave deceitful manner in which she uttered this, than there was of provocation in the ridiculous self-satisfaction of my poor cousin. Jean François sang, and so loud, that he made the very welkin ring again. The Banneret came up to us with his hands in his pockets, looking unutterable things. “He sings well, does he not, Mademoiselle?” addressing Mademoiselle de Féronce. “Confess that you have not heard a finer voice on the Parisian stage, and such a body of voice.”—“Certainly,” said Mademoiselle de Féronce, with perfect gravity, “I never heard any thing so loud.”—“There, I told you,” said the little Banneret, (turning on his heel to me,) “I have always told you, Bertha, no one ever sung like my son; but you would never have believed me, if it had not been for Mademoiselle de Fé-

ronce." Upon the strength of this applause, Jean Francois began again, and in the midst of his longest *roulade* in "Je Marcherai sur le Tonnerre," the door opened, and the stranger appeared. A spectre could not have produced a more sudden effect. "I ceased playing,—the volume of voice, as the Banneret termed it, seemed, indeed, arrested in Jean Francois' mouth, for the latter remained distended to its utmost dimensions. Mademoiselle de Féroncé assumed a graceful attitude. While my aunts, with ceremonious haste, rose up to meet him. A general presentation ensued. "By what name," said my aunts, "am I to make you known?"—"The Marchesè Barbérini." The Marchese Barberini was repeated in a triumphal sort of tone, for even my good aunts were not proof against the glitter of a sounding title. The Banneret, too, was delighted to have a new person to talk to, and piquing himself on his acquaintance with foreign countries, particularly Italy, began with all the bonhommie of familiar gaiety, to talk over Naples and Rome, just as those cities are usually talked over. Then

checking the flow of his erudition mid way, he stopped to recollect, that probably the Marchese belonged to that great Roman family whose name resembled his. The Marchese bowed, mumbled something about distant relationship, then dexterously turning the conversation, introduced some well-managed compliments to Switzerland,—spoke of the wild magnificence of its scenery,—of the superior purity and simplicity of its inhabitants; and ended by saying, “If the fine arts have flourished in a greater degree of perfection with us, the nobler virtues of men have deteriorated, and these it is your boast to have handed down unimpaired from generation to generation.” The Banneret’s eyes sparkled with delight. “What eloquence,” he exclaimed, “what fire; there spoke one of the true genius of the ancient soil: what a charming manner; what grace and life in every action.” The newly discovered Marchese moved away, unable to bear this suffocating praise. “Why, you say nothing, Mademoiselle Pertha?” turning to me. “At your age I was all animation, all patriotism; but you are nearly as

silent as my poor Esther ; but in a few days, I am certain you must confess yourself as much in love with him as we all are." Jean Francois, advancing his face close to mine, and putting on an irresistible grin, said, " What, and forget your poor, faithful, and affianced Jean Francois?" How provoked I was. I was certain the speech had been overheard. In vain I endeavoured to show my indignation by removing my place, for my tormentor followed me, though at humble distance, and persisted in gazing me with a persevering and ridiculous impertinence, which made me ready to laugh and weep at the same instant. My aunts mistook this irritation of feeling for pleasure, and were perfectly satisfied that all was going on right. I saw them giving an account of their possessions and their various little interests to the Marchese, and dwelling with much complacency upon the contiguity of the Banneret's land with their own, and not forgetting the virtues of the young Jean Francois. All this I saw, and was as sure of as though I had heard it, for I knew every gesture and every expression of their counte-

nances. While I sat in agony at these details, tedious in themselves to one who knew not nor cared for the parties, and to me harassing and provoking to the greatest degree. The Marchese from time to time cast a glance at me, and nodded his head, as if in approbation of all my aunts were saying, while Mademoiselle de Féronce sat on the other side enjoying evidently my increasing confusion. Unable longer to endure this torture, I proposed music, in the hope that I should escape farther observation; at least I wished attention by any means save that which now made me an object of ridicule to these strangers. I entreated Mademoiselle de Féronce to sing. After being sufficiently pressed, and having declared that it was impossible to do so, with the accompaniment of the tin tea-kettle, as she very justly called the old spinnet, she complied—no one could sing better—she sung in the Italian style—the only style. The Marchese was delighted, a delight he did not express by words; but when she ~~ceased~~ <sup>had</sup> told ~~her~~ <sup>him</sup> that he had seen some stanzas, which he thought so applicable to her singing, that he



would write them out for her, and having finished doing so, he presented them to her. "I cannot read manuscript," she said, with some affectation, and handing them to Jean Francois, he recited the following words in a very pompous tone :

Oh, breathe again the fairy sound,  
 Those liquid notes of seraph tone,  
 Which still upon the heart resound,  
 When their soft melody is flown.

How wondrous sweet, how chastely rare,  
 Floated the clear yet melting lay ;  
 Was it a Syren's song ? Beware,  
 For Syrens lure the soul away.

'Twas music of some heavenly sphere,  
 The sequence of the brilliant notes  
 Sparkled like meteors bright and clear,  
 That in the purest ether floats.

The rustling of the summer leaf,  
 When Zephyr sighs the woods among,  
 Is not more tender or more brief,  
 Than seemed that strange enchanting song.

The gentlest murmur of the brook,  
 The plaintive ring-dove's fondest lay,  
 The dew-drop from the rose leaf shook  
 Was rude to that soft minstrelsy.

Is it ~~a~~ thing of heaven or earth,  
 Of desperate ill or dear delight ?  
 Say, can a charm of spiritual birth,  
 The trembling doubting soul affright ?

Answer me, lady, thou canst tell,  
 If thou but graciously incline,  
 For she who framed the magic spell  
 Can surely solve this doubt of mine.

“ Every one except myself hailed the Marchese as the author of the verses; every one praised them, except her who felt them most. The Marchese declared they were not his composition, and I was glad to believe him.

“ Jean Francois comforted me, as he imagined, for the mortification of my vanity, in having another commended, by whispering audibly to me, “ She may sing as she chooses, and he may say what he likes, but she does not sing to please my fancy half as well as you, and I will make verses on your talents in a very different style, and upon your singing also, aye, very different from these senseless things that he has been making upon hers.” I tossed my head away in provocation at this pity,—this mistaken dose of consolation. But it was now my turn

to be asked to sing, and I sat down to fulfil this task, nothing loth; for I knew I had a good voice—and I rated my own abilities above their real merit. I was then ignorant of the highest excellencies of the art. Trusting to my full fresh voice, I attempted one of those old-fashioned French compositions, in the bravura style, in the very worst possible taste; and I executed the air detestably, not so much from timidity, as from an overweening desire to excel, which always fails to attain its end. The applauses of Jean François, bestowed precisely in the wrong place, brought out all my defects, and when I ceased singing, the consciousness of my own failure made me ready to weep with unfeigned humiliation. I had never before so anxiously desired to be admired, and had never so totally failed. When I looked around I beheld Mademoiselle de Féronce seated on one of the steps of the *cuvette*, and the Marchese on that immediately below her, looking up ~~and~~ in her countenance, and apparently in earnest conversation, wholly absorbed in each other, and deaf to my laboured performance.

The Bannet, though no very great judge, was aware of my having performed worse than usual. "Mademoiselle is tired, to-night," he said; "the *voce flebile* is impeded by some unwonted cause. Have you caught cold? Another time we will let Mademoiselle de Féronce hear what Swiss voices can do. But fortunately, my son gave no bad specimen. It must be allowed, however, that my niece sings perfectly well. But no wonder, she learned of all the first singers at Paris. Some day or another, perhaps, Mademoiselle Bertha, you may have equal advantages;" and he rubbed his hands, and gazed significantly at Jean Francois.

"The evening seemed to me to be of everlasting duration. At supper, I was again placed by my tormentor, and precisely opposite to the Marchese. For the first time, I saw him look at me attentively, and my eyes even fell beneath the scrutinizing manner, in which he seemed to be examining every lineament of my countenance.

" "I do not like the look of that man," said Jean Francois. "I once saw a picture of

Italian banditti, one of whom exactly resembled him." "Hush," I replied, "I entreat you—reserve these observations for another time,—you will be overheard,—you distress me." Still he continued; "I wonder how les Dames de Chanci could receive such a person, without knowing more particularly how and what he is? Do you think," he continued, pleased with the emotion he excited in me, which he attributed to the powers of his own eloquence; "do you think any person of fashion would be wandering about the country, without attendants or equipage, still less establish himself in a private family, to be a burthen upon them?" There was common sense in these remarks, and I felt their truth; but neither truth or common sense were adapted to my taste, and from the conviction they carried with them, I thought them the more disagreeable. I frowned and turned away in vain; nothing could arrest the flow of Jean Francois's eloquence. Now he perceived his advantage, and I dared not say much, perhaps I could not, to arrest his observation; when, at length, the party broke up, and the Banner-

et and his family departed, to my infinite relief.

“ The Marchese having handed Mademoiselle de Féronce to her carriage, returned to bid my aunts good night : “ Will you not sit down a moment ? ” they said. He bowed and complied. “ What do you think of Mademoiselle de Féronce, is she not very handsome ? ” “ Wonderfully handsome surely,” rejoined my aunt Lolla ; did you ever see her before ? ” The Marchese coloured, but replied only to the previous part of the question, “ Doubtless she is very handsome, but——,” “ But what ? ” I exclaimed quickly. “ But I saw such an example of sweet temper in her ; ” proceeded my aunt Lolla, without attending to my question, or giving the but, on which I laid so much stress, time to be answered ; and here she descanted upon the torn trimming. This eulogium silenced all parties, and once my good aunt was in her favourite theme of praise, there was no chance of her being soon silenced. She went on with the overflowings of her benevolence, to enumerate the merits of Jean Francois, and always appeal-

ed to me for the confirmation of her asseverations. "I believe he is very good," I answered pettishly; provoked at the manner which accompanied these praises, and at the asseverations to which I was called upon to say amen. "but—But has not the faculty of whispering in such manner, as not to be overheard;" said the Marchese, in an under voice, to me, and smiling as he spoke. I was too much confounded to reply, but he relieved my confusion by adding, in the sweetest tone imaginable, "But the suspicions which I excited, however little flattering, were amply repaid by the solicitude which I saw their implication conveyed to your mind, Mademoiselle." These were the first words, on any subject not absolutely indifferent, that the Marchese had addressed to me. They seemed to contain more than any words had ever contained before. I could have wished to have heard them repeated, and I lost the sense of their import in the sensation the sound of his melodious voice conveyed, as vocal music transports with delight those who feel its highest powers, independently of the words which it accompanies. I made

some answer, wholly inapplicable to the subject. The Marchese smiled,—one of those smiles which is like the sun breaking through a cloud, and looking at me with a questioning glance, only added, rising and turning to my aunts, “I fear I have unwarily induced you to defer your usual hour of rest. I hope I shall be forgiven in consideration of the temptation which made me forget myself.” And once more his eyes were fixed on my countenance—mine fell beneath their power. He bowed and withdrew, leaving me in that state of confused delight, by which passion first blinds and then misleads its victim.



## CHAPTER XII.

“THE next day a person arrived on horseback, with letters to the Marchese. After he had been a good while alone with the man, he returned apparently in some dilemma, and my aunts perceiving it, questioned him as to the cause. “My servant is arrived,” he said, “and as I am already indiscreet, in accepting your hospitality for myself, I cannot think of intruding another person upon your family. I am come, therefore, to take my leave, and only to request, as a farther proof of your kindness, that you will recommend me to some person near this part of the country. With one voice, les Dames de Chanci assured him there were none nearer than Lausanne, and begged he would not think of leaving their house, as he was of

no trouble whatever, and added much to their pleasure by his agreeable society. "Bertha, why do you not add your entreaties to ours?" "Because I do not flatter myself they can have any power to sway the Marchese's will." He looked at me with an expression, which said, Are you perfectly sincere? There are moments when we feel able to master the play of the passions on our countenances, although it is a force to our real emotions. At other times, we are overcome by confusion, although we have no cause to be so. In the present instance, I felt that I spoke from a sort of pique, and I looked unabashed at the Marchese, who paid me no grateful compliment; but pride, perhaps, made me composed. There is no greater sedative to the cast of the features.

"The Marchese at length yielded to my aunt's entreaties, and every thing was shortly decided, to the mutual satisfaction of the parties.

"From that hour, the Marchese became an inmate in our family. His attentions to my aunts were unremitting; but to me, his behaviour was of a less steady nature. When in com-

pany with Mademoiselle de Féronce he was evidently under some restraint, and scarcely paid me the common forms of politeness. Or, if at times he seemed to forget that she was present, and lavished all his attentions on me, a word or look from her caused an instantaneous change in his manner towards me, and he would immediately relapse into coldness and indifference. When she was absent, he was then a different character; his heart seemed to expand, the habitual melancholy cast of his countenance gave way to an expression of animated pleasure, at times amounting to gaiety; which seemed to convey the idea, that to me he owed these bright moments of his existence.

“Yet whence,” I would sometimes ask myself, “whence this mysterious, this despotic sway, she seems to hold over a being, to whom, till lately, he was unknown? Why is it, that in her presence he dares not be to me all that he is in her absence? She says she loves me, and would rejoice in ought that could give me pleasure. Why then affect this strange, this capricious estrangement?” I might have imagined that his prefer-

ence for me was fictitious, and only assumed for the purpose of better concealing his attachment for my friend. But his attentions towards her seemed not so much the spontaneous offerings of love and free will, as rights exacted by her as her due. But when did the voice of reason ever startle the ear of love?

“Sophie de Féronce courted me with great assiduity; and, though I was aware of her flattery, it gradually won upon my easy temper—my tenderness of affection; and I soon came to think the day tedious, if great part of it were not spent in her company. She had none of the reflective qualities of mind which would have attracted mine by force of sympathy, but she had a brilliancy of fancy, which dazzled and amused me, and she filled my head with an anxious desire to see a world, of which I had hitherto formed no notion—of which I am perhaps unfitted ever to form a true one. The description of her mode of passing time at Paris, of every body’s mode, as she represented it, was so different from what had ever come under my observation, that the spring of novelty made me

anxiously desire to taste that cup of pleasure, which she painted with all its supposed sweets, and none of its real bitters ; it seemed to me as if I had been losing my existence. Alas ! how soon I learned to know, that loss and gain of time are never fairly appreciated, till sad experience points to past hours, that never can be recalled.

“ Sophie de Féronce never convinced me. I never thought with her ; but I always was carried away by the illusory deceptive charm which hung about her person—her words—her ways. I lost my own identity in her fascinations. Whether my fancy, ever prone to romantic illusion, confounded her person and her presence with that of the Marchese, or whether, by putting me in good humour with myself, she made me suppose I really loved her, I shall not now even pretend to determine. Suffice it to say, that, by the time six weeks had elapsed, I firmly believed that I had formed with Mademoiselle de Féronce an everlasting friendship, which no lapse of time could dissolve, no circumstance annul.

“ As I was naturally candid, the first offering

I made to this new attachment was a confession of the prepossession I had in our first interview formed against her. I avowed my envy and my fear of her success in making a greater impression on the Marchese than I had done. I told her all the wild fancies, in short, of my own creative brain. I told her every thing but the circumstance of the ring, and that I wished also to mention, but something seemed to choke my utterance when I was about to detail that event; besides, I had worn the jewel in my breast. It had become endeared to me by the mystery I attached to it, and I felt an invincible dislike to dislodge it thence. I knew how Sophie regarded such fancies—the ridicule she cast upon all sentimental misses, and I was neither courageous enough to brave her contumely, or persist in the natural bent of my own character openly. But how was this sensation aggravated, when Mademoiselle de Féronce happened to mention having lost a ring? I was on the point of asking her if it was that I found, when the Marchese immediately rejoined, “I too have lost a ring, and all my researches to find it have

been ineffectual. I think this is 'the more strange, because I dropped it off my finger, in a retired part of the wood, and returned an hour after to the very spot, where I question if any footsteps save my own ever wandered." He raised his eyes slowly to my face, and gazed intently on my countenance. Now, then, was the moment, if ever, for me to produce the ring. But it was tied by a ribbon round my neck, and I could not summon sufficient resolution to take it thence. What excuse could I make for having detained it so long without inquiring for its owner? Above all, why should I have worn it concealed? I could give no answer to these questions of conscience, which occurred all at the same instant, and threw me into a state of confusion and anxiety, which increased every moment. Had I at first inquired for the owner of the jewel, and made no mystery of what was in itself perfectly simple, all this humiliation and trouble had been spared me.

"Whenever we feel certain that any mode of conduct is simple, and plain, and right, we should hasten to pursue that open track, least

some unforeseen circumstance or temptation lead us from the beaten path of rectitude ; and who is sure of themselves ?

“ I determined, however, though I postponed returning the ring, that I would only wait a more favourable opportunity for restoring it, as I could no longer shelter my wish to retain it, under the pretence of ignorance with regard to its owner.

“ Time passed on without any alteration in our lives. I saw and conversed with the Marchese all day, and every day. I read the same books, sung the same songs, walked in the same paths, sketched the same scenes, and learned the same language ; namely English, of which he often pronounced phrases, the meaning of which I could guess, but which Mademoiselle de Féronce did not understand. Thus, every latent charm or talent nature had endowed me with was gradually developed. The Marchese seemed to take interest in the eager desire I evinced to obtain information, and to compensate, by my own endeavours, for the few opportunities afforded me of acquiring intellectual im-



provement. At such times, Mademoiselle de Féronce would appear somewhat displeased, and then the Marchese would suddenly stop, and assume a cold and indifferent manner, and I would withdraw to the privacy of my own chamber, and there endeavour to account for this seeming caprice ; which, however, I attributed to every cause but the real one.

## CHAPTER XIII.

“THREE months imperceptibly glided away since the Marchese Barturri first sought refuge in our family. He had now perfectly recovered from the effects of his accident, and had, in that space of time, contrived to endear himself to every member of the household, and to make himself useful to every one in some way or other. He had persuaded Jean Francois to give up singing, and learn the flute. He had bestowed some lessons upon me in the former art; and Mademoiselle de Féronce declared, I sung almost as well as herself. For my aunts he drew plans, and talked over the management of their estate, and the infinite beauty and advantage that would arise from uniting it to the Banneret's property. In short, he won the

hearts of all—of all save Claudine, who persisted in her dislike; and without assigning any reason for so doing, held firm to her opinion.

“ I have sometimes thought, the instinctive prejudices which adhere to vulgar minds, resemble those strong inveterate loves and hatreds which are expressed by animals to particular persons. May it not be that Providence kindly bestows a species of saving instinct in lieu of the more intellectual qualities by which those of higher natures judge their fellow men?

“ The season of the year was now arrived, when it was customary to have recourse to the friendly assistance of the neighbours, to gather the walnuts, and break and prepare them for making oil. For this purpose, we assembled in a great hall, which was dressed up with boughs on the occasion, and every one was called upon to exert themselves in their turn, by telling a story or reciting verses, or exercising any little talent they might possess, for the entertainment of the company.

“ No fastidious taste disdained the attempts which were made to entertain—no invidious

praise detracted from the merit which it appeared to applaud or approve ; but a frank and sincere desire to please and be pleased, diffused a general and unsuspecting hilarity, unknown to the laboured and cautious endeavours of more refined societies.

“ We were all busily engaged at our rural occupation, seated round a great table, and striving to surpass each other in dexterity, when it came to the Banneret’s turn to relate a story. He rubbed his hands, declared he would tell us one that would make our hair stand upright with horror. This declaration seemed, in the mean time, to produce a contrary effect ; for it was not well accompanied by the gay smirking air of the narrator. But every one, nevertheless, according to the friendly spirit of good will, prepared to do their best to be frightened.—The Banneret began.

“ “ The moral of my story then, ladies, is— for, although it is generally customary to reserve that for the end, I beg leave to impress upon your minds from the beginning—the moral of my story then is—’tis not new,” said he look-

ing round on each individual, "I dare say it has been heard by you, and you, and you, and you," teaching hold of the Marchese. "It is, that murder will out." And he gave a sudden shriek, which was echoed by all the women. This facetious joke, however, proved more serious than was intended, for the Marchese complained of sudden sickness. "Ah!" said the Banneret, delighted, "I never produced so much effect before." Shortly after, by the help of air, and care of all the women, who gathered round the Marchese with various remedies, he recovered, and then the attention of the company reverted again to the Banneret, who was waiting impatiently to relate the story. Every one being reseated, he commenced.

### *The Banneret's Tale.*

"A gentleman of some property, no matter in what part of the world, had an only child, of whom he was very fond. This gentleman married a widow, who had one son. For the sake of perspicuity, we will call his name Maurice. This Maurice was a young man of education,

and possessed an independent fortune. A marriage was proposed by the parents for the daughter of Mr — with Maurice the son of his wife. This young woman, besides being heir to her father's property, was young, beautiful, and of the most amiable disposition. All parties were soon agreed, and the nuptials were speedily concluded. The marriage was attended, according to the custom of the country, by the friends and relations of the parties, and a great feast was given. Among the persons who served the company, there was one female, of a strong robust form and figure, red hair, and a bold and wild countenance.

“The bridegroom no sooner beheld this woman, than, as if inspired by some fiend sent from hell for his destruction, he became desperately enamoured of her. The new married couple were, after the manner of the country, conveyed home to the house of Maurice; and it was observed by her friends and neighbours, she was never seen to smile after that moment. Some years elapsed,—the wife of Maurice

(whom we may call Amelia) had two children in this space of time. Yet his unnatural hatred increased daily towards her, and these events, which commonly draw the ties of affection closer, seemed to be additional motives of hatred to him.

"Maurice had a sister who was married, also, in that neighbourhood; and in the event of her dying without offspring, her marriage portion was to revert to her brother Maurice.

"The monster now deliberated on the murder of these innocent brothers to his illicit passion; and their death once effected, he determined to turn all his goods and property into ready money, and sail to America. Such were, in reality, the diabolical schemes framed in the heart of a man who was esteemed a fair character in the general opinion of the county where he resided.

"Nigh to Maurice's house there was a deep glen, through which ran a stream, that, in some places, was much larger than in others, forming pools or wells of water of considerable depth.

This glen was thickly wooded, and its shades were in summer-time impervious to the rays of the sun.

“ One day Maurice requested his wife to accompany him thither, under pretence of gathering nuts. The unsuspecting Amelia readily agreed ; and delighted to find in him a gentleness, and even fondness of manner, to which, in general, he was a stranger, she continued walking by him, and conversing together amicably, in a manner which she had never before enjoyed. They came to the brink of a precipice, on a steep rock that overhung one of the pools above described. Maurice paused. He fixed his eyes intently on his wife—his wife, who was about to be a mother for the third time. For a moment, the mild and placid expression of Amelia’s countenance arrested his sanguinary purpose. But she gazed upwards at the bright and serene heaven that shone unclouded above them ;—and the ferocious Maurice hurled her headlong down the precipice. He ran down, by a circuitous path, to the spot where she had fallen. He found that an eddy



of the stream, had turned the body round again, and brought it to the brink of the water,—that she was stunned, but not dead. Once more she opened her eyes—once more she fixed them on her husband, her murderer, and gently uttered, “For mercy’s sake, do not kill me quite, Maurice !”

“He then, with a cruelty exceeding that of the most ferocious wild beast, seized her by her long and floating hair, and set his foot upon her throat, and stamped there until she was completely dead. He then drew the body among the briars of the neighbouring thickets, and slowly walked away;—trusting that, from the loneliness of the place, there was no probability of the corpse being discovered.

“When night came, the servants wondered their mistress did not return home. Maurice, too, feigned surprise and anxiety. Amelia was no where to be found. Some time elapsed. Researches, inquiries were vain; no tidings could be procured of her. At length, the inhabitants of the whole country round united to make a search through hill and dale, determined to find

her alive or dead. Maurice also joined with the rest. A party of people, amongst whom he was one, came to the very glen in which the murder had been committed. They approached the spot where the body lay. “Look there,” said Maurice, “there in that thicket,”—impelled by an avenging conscience to point out the scene of his iniquity. All eyes were directed to that spot of the wood, when the body was immediately discovered. Horror and lamentations were loudly expressed by every one present, and the murderer bore his feigned part in those general sentiments of all beholders.

“The corpse was conveyed home in order for interment. It was laid out; and, according to the fashion of the country, the friends and neighbours of the deceased watched the body all night. And as Amelia had been deservedly beloved in her lifetime, this mark of respect to her memory was paid by a numerous concourse of persons of all ranks.

“Maurice watched also, and continued to read the Scriptures; but when he attempted to give out a portion of the Psalms, he opened one

passage after another, all applicable to the vengeance denounced against murder. And when, after repeated attempts to find some other subject, he read these memorable words, "The Lord will abhor both the blood-thirsty and deceitful man," Maurice let the book fall from his hands ; and the inhabitants of the country being superstitious, this circumstance began first in their minds to excite a suspicion of his guilt.

"Suspicion once excited soon gained currency, and it was whispered from one to another, that Maurice was a dark and bloody-minded man. But as a love of justice still prevailed, and that hitherto he had borne not only an unblemished reputation, but one conspicuous for piety and good works, the minister of the parish, on the Sunday after Amelia's remains were committed to earth, preached a sermon against defamation, which for a time silenced the voice of murmur.

"But soon after Maurice's sister disappeared in the same mysterious manner his wife had done, and then recommenced all the dreadful surmises, and it became impossible to dissipate

the suspicions which were generally accredited by the mildest and most forbearing minds.

“ The sister’s body was found some time afterwards in the same glen where Amelia’s had been discovered.

“ Maurice had now no sister whose portion he was bound to pay,—no wife to prevent his ~~marrying~~ the woman who excited in him the diabolical passion which led to such unheard of and accumulated crime. But he had two sons, one an infant, the other about two years old, and even the maintenance of these children appeared a ~~burthen~~ in his eyes. The first he strangled as it slept. The latter he attempted to suffocate, but some one coming suddenly to the door of the apartment at the moment he was about to perpetrate the deed, saved him from its execution.

“ The measure of his crimes was now full. He had made an holocaust to Satan, and the dreadful offering appeared to be concealed in the depth of hell’s own gloom ; but

Man cannot cover what God would

Reveal. —

“ A deserter from a regiment had concealed himself in the very glen, at the very time when Maurice murdered his wife, and had actually witnessed the last act of that tragedy. Being a very young lad, and without arms, scared by the the horror of the scene, he had remained passive in silent dismay; but pursued by remorse at his own cowardly quiescence, he afterwards gave himself up to justice, confessing his desertion, and related the event as it actually happened. On this boy's deposition, Maurice was taken up, and accused of the murder. But he remained perfectly composed, and persisted steadily in affirming his innocence. He had often been heard to say, that he kept a journal, and that in that journal was written the most minute particulars of his life. This journal was placed in what he called his black box, but no one knew where this box was kept. It was thought he had entrusted it to his mother, who was a woman of bad character, and worthy of being mother to such a son.

“ It occurred to some person, that if Maurice could be made to believe the above mentioned

journal was discovered, he might be induced to confess his guilt. No sooner was this stratagem put in execution, than he exclaimed, "Then am I forsaken by the devil himself?" and shortly after requested to be taken to church, that he might there make his public confession, previous to being sent to receive the sentence of his execution at a neighbouring town.

"The mother of the person who related this to me was present at the examination of Maurice, and certainly saw and heard, or imagined, in common with all the congregation there assembled, that she saw and heard the wonderful and supernatural circumstances which I am now to add, accompanied the murderer's confession of his guilt.

"After divine service on Sunday subsequent to Maurice's accusation, the monitor stood up, and solemnly adjured him to make a public avowal of his heinous crimes, as he hoped for forgiveness from above.

"Did you murder your wife Amelia?" The prisoner answered with apparent unconcern, "I did murder my wife Amelia." Instantly a

cloud of darkness covered the church, so that one person could not behold another, and a loud shriek was heard.

“ The awe experienced by those who were witnesses of this extraordinary scene may be more easily imagined than described. Gradually the darkness dispersed, and the monitor next addressed Maurice with the question of each of his murders successively. He acknowledged them each in their turn, and the same shrieks and darkness were heard and seen at every separate confession.

“ The prisoner was remanded to prison for public trial by the laws of his country.

“ It was not one, but upwards of a hundred persons, all of credible authority, and respectable in their different stations, who were present on this occasion, and they all bore testimony as to the facts above related.

“ Maurice, on leaving the church, was led past the graves of his murdered relations. He leapt on them each in succession, saying, “ Here lies my wife,—here lies my child,—~~here~~ here lies my

sister." But no sense of remorse appeared to awake the monster to repentance.

"It was an awful dispensation of Providence to behold a human creature destitute of every common feeling of humanity. It was a tremendous lesson to the thoughtless to behold how fearful a thing it is to be left to the devices of their own sinful nature.

"Maurice was conveyed to the gaol in a neighbouring town, where he was attended by devout and holy men of the church, but till the day of his execution he showed no signs of contrition or repentance. When he was led forth from prison, and that the sun shone full upon him, then he cast himself upon the earth, exclaiming, he was not worthy to gaze on that glorious luminary. He groaned in the anguish of unpented guilt, and suffered death despairing of mercy—a tremendous example of the fatal effects of unbridled passion and illicit love. The woman who was the instigator, or at least the cause of all his crimes, was tried for her life on suspicion of being his accomplice; but no positive truth appearing to criminate her, she was



only banished, on some other circumstances of an irregular and dissolute life. As to Maurice's mother, she was left to drag out a miserable existence, goaded by the reproaches of her conscience. Heaven guard us all from such a conscience, and from such a life!"

## CHAPTER XIV.

“SCARCELY had the Banneret finished his tale of horror, and while all his auditors were yet under the influence of its appalling nature, when a person entered the hall precipitately, and, giving a letter to the Marchese, as quickly withdrew. The Marchese glanced at the seal;—it was black. He made a movement with his fingers to break it open; but, as if overcome by sudden emotion, he crumpled the paper in his hand, and pausing for a moment, during which a deadly hue overspread his convulsed countenance, he appeared by violent effort to overcome his agitation—arose, and addressing himself to my aunts, said, that a friend of his had brought some dispatches which he feared would oblige him to take a hasty farewell. “I trust

not," they replied eagerly; "surely you will not leave us so abruptly?" and one of them caught hold of his sleeve, while the other was making all the speed she could towards the door, screaming out, "I will run to the gentleman who brought the letter; perhaps we can prevail with him to take a night's lodging; it is only, you know, ~~Bertha~~, making you sleep in Claudine's room. Bless me, it is no inconvenience at all, and"—"Not for the world," interrupted the Marchese, detaining her; "not for the world could I suffer you to put yourself to such trouble upon my account. I beseech you not to go to him. My friend cannot stay—I know he cannot. I am fully sensible of your kindness, but it is out of my power to profit by it." All this while my aunts continued pressing him by gestures and looks, and words of uncourtly courtesy, to suffer them to invite the gentleman to the house, if only for half an hour—a minute at least—it was so unhospitable to turn a stranger from the door, without a kind greeting, and an offer, at least, of welcome. How long this strife of kindness might have lasted it is

difficult to say, if Mademoiselle de Féronce had not at the moment advanced to wish the Marchese adieu, and, in doing so, dropped at his feet apparently lifeless. He raised her up, and every one flocked around her, while the general attention was busied in efforts to restore Sophie, Jean Francois, whose officious good humour was always ready to commit blunders, ran out of the room, and quickly re-entered, accompanied by a man of gigantic stature, whose dress added to his terrific appearance, being one of the uniforms of those German corps who neither give or receive quarter. "Here is the gentleman," cried Jean Francois, whose supple unhinged joints, dancing in before the iron-form he ushered into the company, made strange contrast with that of the person who stalked in behind him. "Here is the gentleman," and he looked back terrified at this new guest, as if he repented of his success in this occasion. "Ah," said the Marchese, disengaging himself from the circle by which he was surrounded, and affecting a joy his voice and manner belied, "welcome, Carlovitz." The latter bowed his head—

a moment's dead silence succeeded. All eyes were fixed on the new stranger—every heart seemed chilled by his presence. Sophie, recovering from her swoon, screamed on beholding him, and again relapsed into violent hysterics. Every thing was confusion and mystery. Some ran for various remedies, while others all spoke at once, giving different advice. In the midst of this dismay, my aunt Lolla went to the person who caused it, but who seemed quite immoveable in the midst of all this consternation, maintaining the most immutable composure. “Sit down, I pray you, don't be alarmed—don't be agitated; I hope in a short time Mademoiselle de Féronce will recover, and then the Marchese will attend you.” “The Marchese?” repeated the stranger in a questioning tone. “Yes, I will attend you,” said the latter, looking significantly at his friend. The latter again bowed his head in silence, and took the offered seat. As Sophie grew better, the Marchese, disengaging himself from her, for she still continued to hang upon him, murmured some apology to my aunts, which I could not distinctly

hear, and taking the stranger by the arm, they bowed to the company, and walked away.

“What I felt during all this scene is difficult to describe. My attention and curiosity were excited to the utmost. On the whole, the latter sentiment predominated. Yet I felt my heart grow heavy as marble when I saw the door close, and those two unaccountable persons disappear.”

“A general sentiment of surprise, and somewhat of awe, seemed alike to be impressed on the minds of all who were present. Whether the preceding tale of the Banneret had gradually prepared the way for the reception of something miraculous, or whether the almost supernatural appearance of the newly arrived stranger inspired of itself such a sensation, I cannot determine; but each person looked at their neighbour in silence, as if afraid or unwilling to express their own thoughts, and awaiting the previous disclosure of the other's opinion. At length, after a considerable pause—“Who can he be? Whence came he? What is he come for?” issued over and over again, in all possible

tones, from all lips at one and the same instant. "I know not who he is," said Sophie, "but he is a most terrific looking personage, and I am sure his presence bodes no good to the Marchese. I am surprised how you could allow them to go away alone together. Some duel in contemplation—some dreadful catastrophe will ensue, and here we are all sitting in stupified inactivity, as if it were not our duty to prevent the mischief." "Good Heaven," exclaimed my aunts, in violent perturbation, shaking their aprons, and both rising together at the same moment. "What ought we to have done? What can we do? Let us go directly;" and they moved towards the door. "You can do nothing, but something ought to be done, that is certain." "I will tell you," said the Banneret, raising himself upon his tip-toes, as if to exalt his person to the attitude of his conception; "a thought has struck me; let Jean Francois after them; he is the most conciliatory of mortals, and will settle the business in a moment amicably." "Oh yes," I said in the confusion of my fears; "run, my dear Jean Francois, run to prevent murder."

“ Murder !” shrieked all the women present, and began a garrulous and useless lamentation. “ *I run ?*” said Jean Francois ; “ *I run to prevent murder ? why I am more like to get murdered by these braves myself.* Did I not tell you, Mademoiselle, that he looked as like an Italian assassin as any thing could do ? and if he should murder me, what will you say then ? However, if you command me, it is not want of courage—you shall see that which can prevent me ;” and he brandished a little black twisted whalebone cane in signal of his prowess. “ No, no, my boy, we all know that,” replied the Banneret, rubbing his hands together ; “ the son of his father, staunch and true to honour,—a descendant of the Manverts cannot know fear. But I will myself accompany you, and Jaques and Claudine will carry lanthorns and pitchforks, and such other apparatus as may be necessary in case of blood. If they fight with swords, I am myself pretty well versed in that branch of pharmacy. In my youth no man went into company without drawing his sword. But if they fight with pistols, I am not learned



in those sort of wounds, and it may be as well to send for Monsieur Dumenil the surgeon." "Oh," cried I, impatient beyond further endurance, "do not waste words talking of these things, but hasten to follow them." While the Banneret made his preparations with much pompous ceremony, which no urgency could induce him to omit, a thought, or rather an impulse, took possession of me; and I only waited for a favourable moment in which to execute it. I seized an opportunity, when I fancied myself unobserved, and gliding out of the room, I went down a back staircase, and found myself in pursuit of these men. I knew not to what end or to what purpose. A good deal of rain had fallen, and although it was now dark, I could distinguish by moonlight the traces of footsteps, which were visible till I reached the precincts of a neighbouring wood. Here the shadows prevented my having this clue to my research, and I entered one of many paths at a venture.

"It was a showery night, and a hurrying rack of clouds passed in quick succession over the moon, so that at times it was difficult to dis-

cern any object ; at others, a silvery light, which seemed brighter from the preceding darkness, displayed each bush and briar with that marked and sharply graven outline, so peculiarly the effect of moonlight.

“ When I had got some way into the wood, and was out of breath from mounting a steep bank, I fancied I saw figures gliding along the path before me, but the next moment a dense cloud obscured them from my view. I paused a moment to recover my breath ; the next, the moon again emerged from the cloud, and I distinctly saw the two figures coming towards me. I had only time to step aside and conceal myself behind a fragment of rock, which very opportunely had already screened me from their observation. I had not been deceived ; the two figures were those I was in quest of. They were in peaceable conversation, and I reproached myself, when it was too late, for having yielded to a foolish impulse, which made me appear, even in my own eyes, nothing more than a mean busy-body. Yet if they do quarrel, and should they fight, I will then rush between and part

them. My heart beat high with a hope of proving its tenderness and valour. They came immediately to the spot where I was, and finding a commodious part of the stone which formed a natural seat, they sat down. The Marchese looked cautiously around—was silent for another moment, and then said, “Carlovitz, you have been faithful to your promise. I thank you.” “Thanks are not what I demand,” rejoined the other. “I have been faithful to my promise, be you as faithful to yours;—swear,” said he, grasping the Marchese’s arm. “I have promised,” replied the latter proudly, “and my promise is sacred. Do you dare to doubt me?” “No,” rejoined his companion sneeringly, “for it is your own interest to be silent. Your life would pay the forfeit of your breach of honour to me.” “Villain,” exclaimed the Marchese, indignantly, and half rising, as if to move away. “Nay, no abuse,” rejoined the other vehemently, and he half unsheathed his sabre. I saw the steel gleam in the moon ray. I made a movement preparing to rush out, which caused them to look around. They were silent for a few moments. “’Twas but the wind,” said

the Marchese composedly, when he ascertained that there was no person in sight. "I believe not," said the other; "but this is not a place where our business can be settled. The papers which I have brought must be signed, and early to-morrow you must complete your engagement, or you know the consequences." "What! threatening me? I thought you knew me better," rejoined the Marchese, in a tone of defiance; then again more placidly said, "Well, to-morrow be it. I promise to meet you at Lausanne, and to fulfil your wishes. But now, unless you have a mind to draw down suspicion upon us both, I entreat you to let me return, and endeavour to lull those surmises to rest, which your unexpected arrival, your melancholy tidings, have been but too likely to occasion, considering the effect they produced upon my manner." "Go, then," replied Carlovitz, "but be punctual to-morrow at seven. My presence is necessary elsewhere, and if you do not come, I shall seek you." "Enough, enough," replied his companion impatiently; "I have promised." They wrung each other's hand, more in disdain

than friendship; and to my inexpressible joy, they parted. 'Carlovitz striding through the wood by a path that conducted to Lausanne, the latter returning towards our house.

“ “Thank God; thank God,” I said fervently, when I saw them separate. My next thought was to reach home before the Marchese, and running with all speed by a shorter road, I arrived a few moments before him, but so breathless, and overcome with terror and amazement, that, in attempting to run hastily up stairs to my own apartment, my foot entangled in my clothes, and I fell; considerably hurt. I was not able immediately to rise, and while I was yet moaning with pain, the Marchese entered. He came to me, raised me up, inquired with earnestness if I was hurt. I endeavoured to smile, but could not speak. When the pain subsided, I saw the Marchese's eyes were fixed upon my person. I looked down confused, and to my inexpressible consternation, beheld the ring, which I wore tied by a ribbon round my neck, had in my fall escaped from its confinement, and was displayed to view. A consciousness of my own

latent feelings made me mute ; I trembled violently. I looked fearfully at him once,—only once,—but my eyes mingled glances with his eyes, and my secret was no more my own. “ Am I indeed not deceived,” said the Marchese, in a voice where the languor of uncertainty lent its soft tone to delight, “ or do I indulge in a vain fancy, called forth by appearances at once agonizing and enchanting ? Speak to me, answer me, I beseech you. What, not one word, Bertha ? ” The sound of a name, of one’s own name, pronounced thus simply, and unaccompanied by any of the appendages of ceremony or title which common rules of every-day kind make use of—this sound, uttered tenderly, and for the first time, by those we love—who can describe its power ? Does it not comprise all that is precious to the human heart ? Can any after sensation obliterate it from the memory ? It continued to vibrate with thrilling touch upon my ear, long after the actual sound was hushed. It crept through every fibre of my frame ; long after that frame had not one fibre left which was not torn by disappointment. Yet at the moment I re-

remained silent. My eyes were fixed in apparent stagnation of all sensation. My mouth remained half closed. Every faculty seemed to be suspended, and every power of my being to have entrenched itself in my heart. "Speak to me," said the Marchese, "I conjure you—" "I beseech you," said I, "to me, again, I implore you." And, as he pressed my hand, he continued, "Only tell me that my senses do not deceive me. This ring—you knew it mine, and you harboured it in that pure breast; I ask no more—only deign to confirm this happy belief." "Of what use are words?" I replied at length. "This ring, I believe—that is, I have lately believed—to be—but I never knew for certain—nay, even now I am not quite sure"—"Quite sure," he repeated, "Oh, I am quite sure of nothing; yet this is a blessed moment—a moment in which the darkest and brightest hues are mingled which ever checkered human destiny." "The darkest," I said, "Oh, then, the fatal messenger is the messenger of evil. He whom you are to meet to-morrow—he whose sword glittered but a few minutes ago in threatening brightness against your very

life"—“What do I hear—you followed us?—you overheard?” then paused; again added hurriedly, in low and solemn voice, “Do you value my existence, Bertha? Bury what you may have heard or seen in oblivion. Not to the Banneret—not to Mademoiselle de Féronce—not to your aunts—Oh! not to the winds of heaven, I conjure you, repeat not one word of what has unfortunately come to your knowledge.” His countenance was almost convulsed as he spoke. I gazed at him in amazement, but I could only bow my head in token of acquiescence. At the moment the Banneret entered, calling loudly to my aunts. In a moment more every body in the house was collected round us. To the first torrent of questions that were uttered by all, the Marchese made no reply. I first recovered presence of mind enough to say, that I had fallen in running up stairs—was considerably hurt, and that the Marchese came into the house a minute after and was naturally endeavouring to raise me up. This was true, though some of the party, among whom were Jean Francois and Mademoiselle de Fé-



ronce, looked incredulous, and inquiring farther explanation. The Banneret, paying no attention to any one but himself, went up to my companion, and, taking him by the arm, said, "A pretty run I have had after you, truly; I had rather hunt the chamois. But now all the ladies are satisfied, I hope, since you are here and in a whole skin. But your cartouche of a friend, terrified them out of their lives, and I was dispatched in quest of you, expecting bruises and wounds at least, if not combat to the death, and, after all, met with nothing but some bruises and thumps. I gave myself against the trees that I stumbled against this cloudy night." The Marchese endeavoured to smile, but a preoccupied look, and a wildness in his gesture, only betrayed the tumult of his mind; and except a glance of very different expression, which now and then, reached me, and escaped not my observation. He knit his dark brows together, and, taking a station apart from the rest of the company, appeared absorbed in thought.

## CHAPTER XV.

“THE Banneret had ample leisure to relate his adventures in the wood, which he did with his usual prolix pomposity, and my aunts to listen to him with that reverential humility which long habit had ingrafted on their minds for every word he spoke. The Marchese was absent from the scene, buried in thought, and Mademoiselle de Féronce sat silently glancing a scrutinizing eye alternately at us both.

“The gentle Esther, who remained an uninteresting, yet not uninterested spectator, was far from insensible to all that was passing. And while she endeavoured to still the clamours of her brother, Jean François, she was in reality watching over the happiness of one who was scarcely worthy of her disinterested solici-

tude. Many a timid look of fearful inquiry did she steal at me, and when she saw that I felt this painfully, she sighed, as she withdrew her eyes from my countenance. There was something in this silent appeal to my conscience which penetrated the most secret recess of feeling, and I felt all the warning her looks implied.

“In the course of the evening, the Marchese made apologies to my aunts for his abrupt departure; but said it was always something to have the good fortune of passing one night more under their roof. Things as well as persons,” he added, looking at me, “it has often been remarked, are not sufficiently prized till we are about to lose them, and I have now proved the truth of the remark. The quiet of this domestic circle,—the blessed peace that dwells within these walls,—the almost maternal kindness with which you, my honoured friends, have treated a wandering stranger;—all these circumstances combine to fix a lasting gratitude in my heart. Yet invaluable as these enjoyments are, they never before, perhaps, shone forth in all

their plenitude of value till now,—now when—I must—” His voice gradually failed, and the latter words were scarcely audible, from the emotion which affected him. He arose and moved away to another part of the room, till he mastered this agitation.

“ My aunts were unfeignedly affected. They entreated the Marchese not to distress them by an expression of thanks for mere hospitality. Mademoiselle de Féronce, during this scene, maintained a gloomy silence, with her arms folded and her eyes fixed on the ground, except when she raised them to observe what was going on. I longed to speak to her, yet felt an awkwardness in doing so, to which her manner contributed, for Mademoiselle de Féronce was not a person to elicit confidence or court conciliation. At length, unable longer to endure her coldness, I approached her, saying, “ Sophie, love, surely you are not well.”—“ Quite well,” she replied pettishly, “ better, perhaps, than you are.” Though she did not look at me, I felt the emphasis she gave these words; but every trivial word or circumstance seems big with im-

portance, when all our ideas revert to one subject ; and the most isolated accidental phrase seems fraught with portentous meaning, and to refer to that in which all our interests are chained.

“ The remaining part of this memorable evening passed on I scarcely know how ; and all I could distinguish clearly of the many thoughts which my mind revolved, was a dread of the approach of the moment when the Marchese would finally take his leave. I spent the intervening hours endeavouring to prepare for that painful moment ; but such attempts to arm the feelings against the surprise of overwhelming emotion are almost always fruitless. The various trifling circumstances which we plan in imagination, never occur in the order or manner in which we suppose they will occur. A word, a look unexpected and unforeseen, overthrows all our determinations, and nature asserts her rights, and assumes the mastery.

“ I fancied that the Marchese would on this occasion, as he was often wont, accompany Mademoiselle de Féronce and the rest of the party

on their way home, and that, by my remaining in the room where we usually sat, he would, on his return, find me alone ; but none of all these things happened. The Marchese, on the contrary, was the first person to retire. He took an affecting but formal leave once more of my aunts, raised the hand alternately of each of the family, in silence pressed his lips to it, and departed.

“ I felt no inclination to weep, I was not overcome by any tender feeling ; astonishment had deprived me of every softer emotion. I looked at Sophie,—her countenance was immovable. I turned my eyes on Esther, the expression of an anxious concern was painted on her features.

“ Poor young man,” said my aunt Alpina, after a considerable time had elapsed, and speaking with the tremulous voice of agitation ; “ we can never hope to see him again. He is not happy, and it is a pity, for he makes many others happy.”—“ How can you answer for that ?” said Mademoiselle de Féronce abruptly ; “ you know very little about him.”—“ Answer ?” rejoined my aunt Lolla ; “ why, ask all the poor

people in the neighbourhood, and they will answer for it ; why, he has given away a fortune in charities to them ; besides, we know surely as much of his character as you can do, Mademoiselle de Féroncè, and all that we do know is good." Sophie smiled bitterly. " Well," said my amiable aunt, fixing her eyes upon the countenance of the former, " I would not have such a suspicious mind as yours, young lady, no, not for all your wealth. The world has withered the blossoms of your youth, and brought your mind to a sapless state of age.—While mine, thank God, is still young and fresh, to enjoy every belief which can ennoble my fellow creatures. Heaven preserve me from ever going to Paris."—"It would be rather late now," observed the Banneret, rubbing his hands, " to be sure, for you to take a trip there ; but I remember the time when you and I could have enjoyed it very much." My good aunt sighed one sigh of recollected love, and for a moment some remembrances made the Banneret silent. " Those times, however," he added, " at length are past ; but we may all grow

young again on a certain occasion," and he looked alternately at Jean Francois and myself. Esther Manvert felt how ill-timed the allusion was, and proposed to her father to retire. But he was in a vein to talk, and had not half finished all he had to say. He was leaning on the back of a chair, which he constantly twirled about, and at every motion he made, I vainly hoped he would depart. But to my infinite dismay, he dexterously twisted the chair under him and sat down composedly, to commence a long harangue of all that he supposed concerning the Marchese. "There are certainly some very mysterious circumstances, however, attached to this stranger, and I shall now point out to you all the possible incidents which I have conned over in my own mind respecting him." Here he spread his fingers out very wide, and beginning with the thumb, "In the first place," said he—"How long my dear Banneret?" cried Mademoiselle de Féronce, rising and interrupting him: "How long will you detain les Dames de Chance with all your suppositions, and what do they signify?" "I beg their pardon," he re-



plied ; “ only this I must remark, since there is every reason to believe, from all the circumstances I was going to point out, that the Marchese, or the merchant, or adventurer, for ought I know, is obliged to fly his country, upon some intrigue or other of love, money, or politics ; I think it extremely fortunate you have got rid of him—for these romance heroes are not good for much, and they always turn women’s heads, old and young.” As my aunts did not approve of the subject started by the Banneret, and as it was not only their maxim, but their rule of action, to avoid all evil speaking of any human being, the conversation languished, and the Banneret, at length, was obliged to give the matter up and return home. When I embraced Sophie, she scarcely returned my embrace, and I had not courage to question her as to the cause of her coldness. When Esther wished me good night, she pressed me affectionately to her, and whispered, “ Beware, Bertha, beware.” They shortly after departed, and I was left alone. What a change a few hours had wrought in my existence. The knowledge of my own

heart had been displayed to me. I was not blind to the precipice which yawned at my feet, but it was a precipice girt with flowers. I had breathed their dangerous fragrance, and I sought not to withdraw myself from their intoxicating influence.

“ This first delusion of the mind steals on by such imperceptible degrees, that all is viewed through the medium of inebriation, ere reason is aware that her throne is usurped; every thing past is as if it had never been, and every thing future becomes indifferent, save as it may tend to administer to this dangerous state of mental anarchy. I tried to collect my thoughts, to sober their giddy flight, but one only idea presented itself under a thousand different forms. The Marchese loved me,—it was not then Sophie de Féronce that he loved—the conquering Parisian beauty,—it was I, simple unsophisticated I, who had unconsciously engaged his affections, and who had induced him to protract his sejour under our roof. Every feeling was gratified by the thought. Vanity, tenderness of nature, romance of imagination—all combined

to deceive me. I believed I loved—I thought I was beloved. ' This first moment in life, be it real, be it imaginary or deceptive, is never forgotten. Riper years may produce more durable happiness—the disappointments of our past existence may teach us more worthy appreciation of sober happiness, but no subsequent sensation is ever felt in the same intense degree ; no meridian hour of joy can ever equal this first sun-rise of felicity ;—but will it, can it last ?—Impossible.

## CHAPTER XVI.

“ MY soul seemed too scanty to contain its sensations. I opened my window, as if to acquire space for this dilation of feeling. The night was dark and calm ; as I gazed on vacancy, a few stars became visible, and glittered in their dark canopy—the last leaves of autumn dropped slowly to the ground, a fresh odour was extracted from them by the recent shower, and I inhaled their fragrance with a melancholy delight ; for does not melancholy mingle in all the highest delights of the soul ?

“ I continued gazing on the quiet scene, till chilled by the dampness of the air, and lulled into a mystical state of fancy—I felt a species of awe steal over me,—the rustling of the falling leaves seemed to me to repeat in low and me-

lancholy murmurs the last word of Esther's good night, "Beware!" I was about to close the window, when I thought I saw a figure glide along the wall. Deep shadow from a projection of the building of the house made me doubt whether this was or was not reality,—a lurking wish whispered that it might be the Marchese returned to bid me adieu. My heart beat quickly as I looked and listened. Immediately I heard a voice which I could not mistake, speak in a low tone, and say, "Bertha, I conjure you, meet me for *one moment* in the parlour,—do not refuse this my first, perhaps my last request." I waited not to reflect, but flew, as I imagined, to receive from him some explanation of that mystery which had hitherto involved him. When I beheld the Marchese, in one instant my heart shrunk back upon itself, and I felt the impropriety of having, at this undue hour, consented thus clandestinely to meet him. I was abashed and humbled, and remained silent, as if he were to pronounce my doom. But I no longer beheld the same man I had seen a few hours before.

whose countenance beamed with love and triumph, and a softer expression still of indefinite but subdued kind. All this had vanished. The Marchese, of grand, cold, mysterious, and commanding aspect, stood before me. “*Mademoiselle de Chanci*,” he said calmly, “I took the liberty of entreating a few moments interview with you alone, in order to request two things. One is, that you will restore to me the jewel that you have done me the honour to wear, and deign to accept this one in its stead,” at the same time presenting me with another infinitely more costly. “The other favour I have to request is, that you will not, under any circumstances whatever, mention to living mortal the words you overheard in the wood,—unless you wish my death,” he added, in a deep impressive tone.

“Roused to a sense of self-dignity by the previous part of this speech, I collected my thoughts sufficiently to answer with apparent composure, “That, on all accounts, he might depend upon my secrecy; and as for the ring, I had only kept it whilst uncertain of its owner, and

was happy in having this opportunity of restoring it ; but I could not think of accepting another." I felt the blush of conscious untruth crimson over my countenance, and I dared not trust myself to look up, lest my feelings should have betrayed me. I added, that he might rely upon my secrecy ; and hastily wishing him all prosperity, I withdrew.

" The bright visions which had so lately dazzled me were in one instant dispelled, and, instead of those gorgeous colours of imagination which floated so richly before me, life itself seemed to me colourless, and one long dark line marked out its track.

" The changes my feelings had undergone within the last few hours were so sudden, so complete, so astonishing, that I remained bewildered in their inextricable maze. When the next morning arrived after this tumultuous day, I had not one pleasurable stimulus to induce me to recommence existence. I closed my eyes to shut out the light of day, and wished I could as readily have closed the scenes of memory for ever. Listless and wretched, I dreaded to find

impressed in every spot, in every piece of furniture, remembrances of him I was to see no more,—of him who, for an instant, had placed me in the ideal world I pictured so fair, and almost at the same instant expelled me thence, to wander henceforth in a cheerless waste. The chair on which he had rested, the book he had marked, even the very wall over which I had seen the shadow of his graceful figure pass, all these trifles came, armed with so many poignards to stab me to the heart.

“The idea of beholding Sophie, of being an object of her animadversions, was become inexpressibly painful. She, who but one day before made the solace of my life, she in whom I existed, and through whose means I had so long allowed myself to harbour love under the disguise of friendship, was now become a canker to my peace, a reproach to my conscience. Yes ! I confess it, a jealousy the most inveterate took possession of me. I saw in Sophie the cause of my humiliation and disappointment. How, I knew not, but some how I was sure she was. The Marchese, I said, would have declared his



love, had it not been for her. Nay, perhaps he does love me still, but she has gained an ascendancy over his mind, and has artfully won over that affection which, were it not for her, I should have enjoyed unshared, unlimited. Yet if it were thus, would it not be better to be ingenuous to tell her all, and openly demand on what degree of interest she founded an excuse for her conduct? Oh! how much pains would be spared to us, if simple truth were always our guide; but the idea of betraying the Marchese misled my better judgment. I had, in fact, no duty which bound me to be thus scrupulous as to his interests. Nay, perhaps, the Marchese himself played a double part. But I chased away the thought; it was barely admitted for an instant, and was so infinitely more painful than any other, that it was the last to which I would give credence. Poor common sense,—how are you buffeted and ill-treated, and contemned by the passions! In short, I could not lay open my heart to Sophie de Féronce. The instant we feel we have a secret of our own, which we cannot tell our friend, we enter upon a maze of

errors, which leads too frequently to misery or crime, and generally to both.

“ When I met my aunts they talked over the Marchese with all the slow and diffuse gravity of their age, when excited by kindly interest. How inadequate to the subject did their commendations seem ! The next painful thing to never hearing the name pronounced, which is the only one we inwardly invoke, is to hear that name profaned by others, or mentioned in a manner inadequate to our idea of its merits.

“ Neither the Banneret or any of his family came to us the day after the Marchese’s departure,—that day whose length seemed to me eternal. When the hours revolved at which it was customary for him to appear, I started as if I expected to see him enter, and when we sat down to dinner an empty chair had been placed inadvertently between myself and my aunt Lol-la, which he was wont to occupy. I could have died sooner than have removed that chair. “ Our table is too large now,” said one of my aunts ; that now, how heavily it echoed at my heart !

“I hear,” rejoined my aunt Lolla, after a long pause; “I hear that the Marchese did not leave Lausanne till twelve o’clock this day. He was accompanied by his friend. I have a note from the Bannèret, informing me, that he called at Manvert in passing, to take leave of them.” This information struck another pang to my soul. It contained nothing very new or surprising, but it seemed a confirmation of my fears; and one can sometimes bear to think of what one can scarcely bear to hear with patience pronounced by the lips of others. Sophie had not written to me; I almost felt obliged by her silence; and two or three days passed by without any communication with the Manvert family. The fourth day I was awoke very early by the arrival of Jean Francois, who begged to see me. He informed me, that his sister, who had long been in a precarious state of health, had become much worse, and was in imminent danger. “Oh, Mademoiselle, come with me instantly, I conjure you,—come and console my father; come and support my poor sister. You are always good and compassionate,—you will

be of use to them. As to Mademoiselle de Féronce, I never liked her, and now like her less than ever, she is so harsh, so unfeeling." I did not delay a moment. I charged Claudine to break the matter as she could to my aunts, and every other thought was absorbed in that of seeing the amiable Esther dying. When a few instants thus suffice to change the whole current of thoughts and feelings; and when that which exists one hour the next may be no more,—how can we boast in the foolish pride of our hearts of the duration or certitude of any sentiment! How dare we presumptuously to talk of the permanency of our affections? Yet all conspires to lead us to love only that which is durable either in others or in ourselves,—where then can the soul of man find rest? Oh! surely not on earth. There is a time in every body's life, when they must feel this painful but wholesome truth; and when the dearest ties which bind the heart of man are looked at fearfully, and as blessings lent, not given. I had not then reached this period of existence. Exulting in the first glow of affectionate feeling, I

believed that all I felt I should ever continue to feel—and that my friendships and my loves could end but with my life. When I arrived at the Banneret's door, Sophie stood on the threshold. She placed her finger on her lips in token of silence; and the concern that mellowed her countenance to an unusual expression of tenderness made me apprehend the worst. I flew to her, and clasping her in my arms, burst into tears. My heart was full, and glad of an excuse to weep. The tears of penitential kindness I shed in my friend's arms were more the tribute of a peace-offering to returning friendship than excited by the illness of Esther. It seemed to me also that Jean Francois had wronged her by saying she was indifferent to his sister's suffering; and I also had doubly wronged her by a concealed kind of sentiment of jealousy and ill will, which made me glad to catch at any circumstance, however trivial, which could prove a justification to my conscience.

“Mademoiselle de Féroncée received this ebullition of feeling as she always was wont to do similar effusion of sentiment; with a gentle com-

posure, which checked its ardent glow, she bade me not alarm myself unnecessarily. "Esther," she said, "though in a weak and delicate state, was considerably better—that she was lulled to sleep, under the influence of calming medicines, and every thing was to be hoped from her present quiet state. Indeed," she added, "I was averse to having you sent for, because I know," and she gave one of those bitter smiles which ever cut me to the heart,—“because I know you people of fine feeling always do more harm than good upon such occasions.”

“The Banneret, who had given way to the most frantic grief during his daughter’s extreme danger, as readily indulged the most boisterous and ill founded expressions of delight and security. He swore that the instant she was able to move, he would take her to a warm climate to pass the winter, and had sent to me to propose that I should accompany her. “’Tis nothing, after all,” he continued, “but lowness of spirits, brought on by the death of her lover, and encouraged by that foolish romantic spirit which thinks it amiable to cherish sorrow. A little

variety will dispel the gloom, and, perhaps, some other person may be found to console her. I only wonder that I, who always think of every thing, should not have thought of this long before now." Thus did the Banneret converse, while his proposition to me was almost the only part of his speech that I listened to. To travel—to see a new country—to cross the Alps, which I had so often looked at as the walls of a prison;—what vague tumultuous fancies flitted in a thousand shapes before me. "To go to Italy perhaps—the Marchese's country; my heart beat quick, and my cheeks flushed at the thought. Sophie's eyes were on my countenance—she seemed to read my thoughts—when shortly after we were left alone. Awaiting the moment of Esther's awakening, a silence ensued, which neither seemed inclined to break, and during which the remembrance of all that had passed recurred slowly and distinctly to me in succession. I looked at my friend to see if I could discover any consciousness of the subject in her demeanour. "I see," said she, approaching and taking my hand in her kindest

manner, "I see what is passing in your mind—I see what is passing in your mind as plainly as if you spoke aloud; indeed, I have seen it all along, and the only part of the discovery which is painful to me is to have found myself mistaken in your character." Astonished and off my guard at this strange attack, I replied with much confusion, "What have you seen, Sophie—what discovery have you made—what part of my conduct has given you pain?" "Nay," she rejoined, "young as you are, and ignorant as I allow you must be of the ways of the world, there is still a self-consciousness in woman which does not allow her to be long a stranger to the real nature of the sentiments she feels; and when a friend, or at least a person to whom she has given that appellation, observes that such sentiments are carefully concealed from her knowledge, that she neither participates in the joys or sorrows, hopes or fears, that that friend feels, how can she avoid being hurt, humiliated, mortified, at finding she held a mere empty title of friendship, but never, in fact, shared in its rights or privileges? Yes, Bertha," she



continued, seeing me much agitated and confounded, “you may weep, for you have treated me ill.” Wholly unprepared for this view of the subject, which she had thus dexterously contrived to turn in the manner which suited her best—conscious as I was that jealousy had for a time estranged my heart from her, I began to be beguiled into the belief that I was not the aggrieved person but the aggressor, and as Sophie continued to talk for some time in the same strain with much plausibility, though with perfect sophistry, I gradually became more and more touched, when a sudden burst of tender reproaches completed the deception; and melted by her apparent gentleness and affection, I threw myself upon her mercy like a penitent criminal; and when my emotion allowed me to articulate, I said, sobbing as I spoke, “Dearest Sophie, I have ever truly loved you. I never meant to deceive you, indeed—indeed, I did not.” “Why, then, conceal from me,” she retorted with quickness, “the ring you wore? Why give a clandestine meeting to the Marchese on the stair-case? And why, in short, bury in

silence and secrecy the mutual passion which exists between you?" "Mutual passion? Alas! dear Sophie, the Marchese does not love me; and I knew not that I loved him till——" Here, remembering my promise of eternal secrecy, I could not mention the wood scene; and, checking the wish I had to be quite communicative, I stopped abruptly. "Enough of all this girlishness," said she, resuming the tone of coldness and superiority most natural to her; "I never wish to pry into a heart that is shut to my affectionate solicitude; and sentimental confidences and scenes are alike my aversion." "No," I said, "Sophie, it is not enough," with a voice suffocated by emotion, "it is not enough. You must—you shall hear my justification." She paused in an attitude of deep attention. I hesitated, knowing there was a point beyond which my confidence could not be extended; and, fearing to approach it hurriedly and unawares, I tried to compose my thoughts to a succinct relation of feelings, but such endeavours, under such restrictions, always cast an awkward constrained air even over the truth.

"Sophie, listen to me: if I admired the

Marchese when I first beheld him, 'you could not suppose me so wild, so bold, as to form any plan to obtain his love. You came almost at the same time he did—I fancied—shall I confess it?—At first I fancied you loved him, and were beloved; and if subsequently"—a movement of haughty impatience on her part made me add, "Nay, Sophie, do not be offended. I laid no schemes—I looked not at futurity. The day, as it passed, was a life to me—scarcely did I think of the succeeding hour, so much did the actual one engross me. As to my meeting the Marchese on the staircase the night previous to his departure, that was," I continued (speaking with breathlessness and colouring,) "that was mere accident—and—it was the first, as it will be the last meeting of that kind, (laying much stress on the last two words) we can ever have." I added in a hurried way, "I assure you, I am too proud to indulge a partiality for a person who is wholly without preference for me.

"As to his ring, I returned it, and my ever having seen, conversed with, or admired him, must henceforth be as if it had never been."

Sophie smiled incredulously, then said, "Well now, that you have made me this forced confession, for I must acknowledge, I do not regard it as a voluntary confidence, I shall own, that it will be very long if ever you can hold the same place in my affections, which a more open conduct would have ensured you,—for, without blaming you, I confess you are not the character I took you for." Subdued and wretched at this anathema, I hung my head like a conscious criminal, without making any farther justification. My heart, too tender in its nature for the wear and tear of every day use, never had that resource in offended pride, whatever I might pretend, which is to many a shield against the wounds of falseness or indifference. The heart that admits pride is no longer open to love.

"I only felt that I loved Sophie, that her reproaches wronged me, that to be reinstated in her friendship, I would have given up any thing else save the fond delusion I still secretly cherished, that, in spite of present appearances, I was beloved by the Marchese.

## CHAPTER XVII.

“OUR conversation was put an end to, by a message from Esther, desiring to see me. I obeyed her summons hastily. “The beautiful colouring of her deceitful malady tinted her cheek with the false appearances of health. “I am delighted, dear Esther, to see you so much better than I could have expected.” “Come near me,” she said, by way of reply, and holding out her hand to me as she spoke with broken respiration, continued, “You are come, and I am thankful that we meet again here in this world. I have something to say to you, which, did I not say, would hang heavy on my parting soul.” “Dear Esther, I beseech you, talk not of parting. Your youth, your usual health, all, all promise us the continued enjoyment of

your loved presence." She smiled faintly as she answered, "It is not physical health and strength which can impart vigour to the frame, when that of the soul is decayed. It is in vain to deceive you, and it is long since I have wished to deceive myself: for it is not the duration of life which can give us any accurate estimation of existence. I have been happy—blessed are those who can say this in the fulness of the term, with innocence of conscience, even though it is a happiness flown for ever. But it is not of myself I wish now to speak, although it is from my own experience I have learned to fear for you. Bertha, beware of Mademoiselle de Féroncè, beware of the Marchese."—"I am at a loss to guess your meaning, Esther." She looked at me with an ethereal expression of gentleness and pity, which appeared to be rather the compassion of an unembodied spirit, than that of mortal sympathy. "I fear, my dear Bertha, you are but too conscious of what I would say,—I doubt the sincerity, the virtue of Sophie de Féroncè. She is not a natural character, and yet possesses every requisite which

can give her ascendancy over you ; and regard  
 to the Marchese, I am well assured he is cal-  
 culated to destroy your peace thence to promote  
 it. Confide not in the one, and there is  
 yet time, recall this misjudgment which you  
 have indulged for the other, that he corroding  
 pangs of remorse or hope passion feed  
 upon your heart, and consume days in un-  
 availing sorrow and repentance

“ During this discourse, I descended into the  
 secret recess of my soul. “ Is then my folly,”  
 I thought, “ so visible to every eye, that all  
 who know me see it written on my brow ?”  
 Confused and mortified, I remained silent—un-  
 able to make any reply. “ My dear Bertha,  
 I ask no answer,” said Esther ; “ I pray you  
 seek for none. My unobtrusive friendship will  
 best show itself henceforth in silence. My  
 words are dictated by no interested motives, no  
 mischievous wish to divide friends, or sow the  
 seeds of suspicion among the flowers of amity ;  
 but indeed, indeed, Mademoiselle de Féronce  
 and Bertha de Chanci can never be united in  
 the bonds of real friendship. Do not reply,”

seeing me about to speak; "This is not the moment when you can coolly discuss this matter. Keep what I have said within your breast, and let it only serve as a beacon to guide your course, not as a flame of discord, to break forth into violence and destruction. I have now a favour to request of you—it is simply this—to accompany me on a journey we are to take. Not that I wish you to go all the way with me," she added, with a melancholy smile; "but of this enough, as it gives you pain. What I seriously wish is, that, as my father has long set his heart upon travelling, and fancies that change of place will change the tenor of my thoughts,—that you will accompany me to Nice. He knows not that there are some feelings so incorporated with our nature, that while they consume, they feed the lamp of life. But, nevertheless, to wrestle longer with his will is against that humility and resignation to which I bow my spirit, for the remaining time I have to be on earth. Will you accompany me on our tour? it will not be a very long one." And clasping her hands together, looked meek-



ly, upwards, adding in a faint yet fervent tone, "If it be the will of Heaven, I hope not, for all here to me is desolate."

"My own spirits had been excited by the rapid fluctuation of my feelings. This last scene completely overcame me. I knelt by the bedside of Esther, and sobbed in the unrepressed indulgence of tears. "Let me entreat you," said my cousin, "to moderate this emotion, for your sake, for my sake." I made the effort she entreated me to make, and after sometime had elapsed, I succeeded; but when the heart is new to feeling, it is not, as it becomes afterwards, hardened and dried up by the touch of sorrow; it has not learned to absorb its grief, or place the iron fence of hard necessity around its wild pulsations, and with a tearless eye, to feel the aching pang which saps the vital essence of our being.

"I promised Esther to accompany her whithersoever she went,—glad to catch at any circumstance which excited the same tone of tender feeling, and kept alive that vivid interest so lately felt, and without which I felt it death

to live. I turned the whole torrent of my fondest and most enthusiastic thoughts on the amiable, and, as I believed, dying Esther.

“Not all the weak fondness of my nature could make me longer blind to the injustice of Sophie, and, although I harboured no resentment against her, I sickened at the tyrannic influence which she exerted. I know not if it be the nature of the generality of mankind, to pass through the various stages of existence with only just as much relish of its pains and pleasures as serves to distinguish animal from vegetable life. But this I know, there are some few among the general herd, who adhere with tenacity to lively impressions of joy and anguish, as to an aliment which is necessary to support their mental being. The first friendship I ever formed was but the reflection of a more glowing passion. I had sought it as a refuge from that passion, but it deceived me; and then, what could I cling to? Another interest was necessary to me, yet one that bore no character of being changeable. The dying Esther offered the best resource—the safest refuge. Her

beauty faded, her youth decayed, her wishes buried with her love, her hopes all raised above this sublunary sphere; was an object calculated to excite at once the most genuine, and the most visionary enthusiasm. I wondered she had never done so before. I accused myself of selfishness and insensibility, and became devoted to this new idol of my imagination.

“My aunts, without any of this dangerous ingredient, of which I have been ever the victim, possessed a noble, disinterested, sober-minded, kindness; which raised no fictitious gloom, neither dazzled by a brief and blazing splendour. They thought of other's happiness, not of their own; and by their disinterested nature, secured that good to themselves, which a different disposition seeks in vain to attain.

“As soon as they were informed of Esther's melancholy and hopeless state of health, they gave me up entirely to devote myself to her comfort, and I became settled at Manvert as her nurse.

“Sophie de Féronce preserved the same chilling coldness towards me. Once or twice I at-

tempted to soften her obduracy, but a calm contempt repelled my endeavours to bring about a reconciliation; and gradually produced in me the indifference she herself felt: whilst Jean Francois, by the ceaseless sunshine of his good temper, won upon me unconsciously, and made me secretly acknowledge, that, in the common intercourse of life, there are humble though powerful qualities of daily momentary effect, which are more conducive to our happiness, than others of a higher order. His person even grew familiar to my eye. He seemed less hideous, and ceased to be displeasing to me. The cause of this transformation was not so much in him as in myself.

“Passion blinds us to every thing; how insipid does it not render all the plain intercourse of real life? How insufferable does its distorting power make every person, who, in the sober judgment of our faculties, we allow to be possessed of many engaging qualities? This passion became subdued and quieted, under the calming influence of the tranquil, yet feeling, tenor of Esther's reasonable mind. The unremitting at-

tentions of Jean Francois to his sister, his eager desire to be serviceable to her, his total forgetfulness of self, all gained insensibly upon me, and before I absolutely acknowledged, I decidedly felt, that the truly good never fail, sooner or later, to command that tender esteem, which outlives the slavish vassalage we pay to all the misleading power of more brilliant attributes.

“During my residence at Manvert, which lasted nearly a fortnight, I went often to see my aunts, and in those walks was ever accompanied by Jean Francois. One day, in going through the part of the wood where I had seen and heard the terrific stranger engaged in mysterious and unaccountable converse with the Marchese, I stopped to think of that scene ; so short, so fearful, yet so indelibly impressed on my memory had that moment been, that once it obtained admission to my thoughts, it brought along with it a train of dangerous remembrances. I leant on the arm of Jean Francois, but my heart was far from him. He waited patiently till my reverie should subside, when Sophie de Féronce suddenly appeared before us, and bursting into

an affected laugh, said, she would give worlds to have a painter's art, in order to delineate the appearance we bore. "Such a pair of lovers!" she added sneeringly; "It would be worth while sending their portraits to the Marchese." There was something malignant and provoking in the manner, more even than in the matter, of this idle speech. I felt it to be peculiarly irksome, and therefore was less able to pass it off as a jest. "We are not lovers," I replied; "we are what is better—we are friends." "Ah," rejoined Jean Francois, relapsing into one of his terrible tender moods, "as to better, Mademoiselle, I know not what to say to that; but better may come of it than what is, and I must suffer before I may dare to hope." My former disgust now in a moment returned towards my innocent companion;—so easy is it for mischievous persons to disseminate their own bitterness. Pleased at the sentiments of dislike which she saw she had excited and aroused in me, she offered, with a cheerful air, to accompany us to my aunts, and informed us on our way, that a cousin of

hers was arrived at Lausanne, with whom she intended in a few days to return to Paris.

“When a person is going away, our heart softens. Their merits appear in colours more brilliant than true ; and their imperfections disappear. At hearing Sophie’s intentions to depart, announced so unexpectedly, the former tenderness I felt for her returned. It seemed then only that the idea of separating from her had ever occurred to me, and now that I heard it from her own lips, it had the power of recalling once more all the affection I had felt, and which I only fancied I had taught myself to forget.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

“WITH unaffected expressions of regret, I lamented a separation which was likely to prove of long duration. Mademoiselle de Féronce received these demonstrations of my friendship with a kind of chilling politeness; and an expression of mistrust marked her features, which pained me beyond expression.

“Sophie,” I cried, impetuously, “I cannot bear your manner. You wrong me; you have now cherished some fatal prepossession against me, which renders you unjust, as well as unkind. Speak to me openly, tax me with your suspicions, suffer me to justify myself; and having done so, then should you not be convinced I am blameless of the faults you now secretly impute to me, then it will be time to treat me



thus harshly. Oh, Sophie! I had resolved never again to have addressed you in this manner—to have allowed all I ever felt to pass away in the silence of oblivion. But never to see you again, and to allow you to depart without one more attempt at reconciliation, I have not the heart.” As I pronounced these words, my faltering voice, my tears, my earnestness and truth, testified the warmth and sincerity of what I uttered. “Do not,” replied Sophie, in a monotonous, unmoved tone of voice, “do not indulge in these romantic effusions, which one day or other you will perhaps remember only as a painful dream. And in your intercourse with others they will only serve to lead you into misery and error. We like each other just as much as is necessary, and the most violent friendships are not the most lasting. You know I always warned you that my way of viewing things was very different from yours; and when you were soaring in worlds of your own creation, I was quietly enjoying the world as it really exists. You should not, therefore, be surprised if now I do not meet all the ardour of your imagination with

that warmth which you seem to claim as your due." It was by conversations of a similar nature that Mademoiselle de Féronce gradually extinguished the last spark of my affection for her. But in proportion as I felt this icy indifference chill my breast, a state more desolate than even the first poignancy of disappointed affection succeeded. My heart seemed turned to marble, as heavy and as cold. Yet still my ardent imagination glowed, and ingenious to torture me, conjured up all the fond phantoms of tender and everlasting friendship which had been so very dear to me. It is not when the soul is completely subdued to resignation that we demand or require compassion. The state most deserving of tenderest compassion is that, when our capacities for happiness are all alive, and every hope in its attainment withered or dead. All within us is fraught with tumultuous sensation, and every thing without us is inanimate and cheerless. The air, the skies, music, silence, impart in their respective modes a thousand recollections of joys we seem made for; joys beyond the conception of grosser souls to

conceive, and 'yet—and yet for us creation is a void: Oh anguish! by contrast rendered a thousand times more poignant! Those only who have felt can understand its force; and such language will ever remain dead to the happier multitude who constitute mankind.

“The day arrived when Sophie left Manvert. After her departure I sunk into a complete calm. Life was stagnant. The languishing state of Esther excited no present alarm. The monotonous occupations of a household—those busy, trivial, and ever recurring cares to preserve an existence, which thus preserved is mere vegetation—all combined with the lifeless feel of nature at this season of the year, to deaden my faculties, to plunge me in a dormant state, from which the epoch of our intended removal from Manvert alone aroused me.

“Every thing was finally arranged for our departure, and I confess, notwithstanding the natural and unavoidable sorrow I felt to part from my aunts, and my attachment also to the local beauties of my native country, yet a perverse sense of pleasure throbbed at my heart from the

idea of a change of scene. I was ashamed to catch myself gazing at moments anxiously on the distant mountains, and wishing I had passed their boundary, to enter upon scenes untried, unknown. This is that longing for the far off land which paints the distant as the future fair. How different from the dark colouring with which experience tinges the things to come! All then that is unseen seems fraught with danger and dismay. On the morning when we were to leave our quiet home, I rose very early, and watched the autumnal mists slowly rising from the mountains of the Valais, as if they were a veil which would discover by their withdrawing some scene of pleasure and delight as yet untasted. The majesty of the scene, however, checked this idle elation of hope. I dared hardly long indulge such trivial sentiments in presence of all that was great and sober in creation. My eyes wandered over the scene at first restlessly, but at length singled out minutely each furrow and craggy outline which they had beheld in all the vicissitudes of the seasons, and in all their consequent gradations of light and sha-

dow, till a sensation of attachment to them unknown before stole over my feelings. Thus softened, thus melted, I passed on to my aunts' apartment, but stopped at the door, overcome by a thousand remembrances, which almost made me feel it wrong to leave, even for a time, their venerable presence. They were of great age; they might possibly not live to see me return. Why should I go? After all, my attachment to Esther was, not, ought not to be, what it was to them. Was not an idle, latent wish to divert myself the real cause which led me away? Tears of contrition filled my eyes, but they were useless tears of desultory feeling; they did not spring from any principle, and had not any sound influence on my actions. Had it been otherwise, I should perhaps have been spared by remaining.—But this is a fruitless retrospection. I anticipate my narrative.

“ My aunts heard my footsteps as I lingered at their door. “ Bertha, my queen, is it you ?” I approached them, and could hardly subdue my emotion, when they said cheerfully, “ My dear child, do not suffer yourself to be cast

down. You must rally your spirits for the sake of poor Esther." "Ah! poor Esther," I repeated, and gave way to the burst of tenderness which I could no longer restrain. "My love," said my aunt Alpina, after a moment's pause, and speaking with a voice which her endeavour to render steady only served to render more tremulous, "there are scenes of trial we must all go through; to fly them is unwise and vain. The chastening hand of Heaven we cannot escape; and woe be to those who, in the pride of their hearts, affect stoicism, and think to avoid the blow by not bending beneath the stroke. This moral apathy may harden, but will never ameliorate the heart, and Providence punishes such impious disdain of its chastisements. Equally foolish are those, and equally distant from true happiness, who attempt to drown care in frivolous pursuits, or worldly dissipation. The wholesome chastisement must be felt,—the burden must be borne; blessed are those who turn both to their souls' warfare. To meet misfortunes with pious resignation, never to avoid scenes of woe, where serious thought

may be awakened, but to submit meekly ; this is that Christian philosophy, which is at once simple and sublime. I do not think your cousin will live to return ; but should she not, by accompanying her, you will have the soothing reflection of thinking you attended her to the last, and calmed her parting spirit. How different is this consolatory reflection to the reproachful consciousness of neglecting any means in our power, from the unworthy motive of sparing selfish feelings. And if the dear Esther should recover," added my aunt Lolla, in her own soft voice, (for she had always a ray of sunshine in her fancy to pierce the gloom,) " think, my love, what joy it will give you to know that you administered to her recovery." " It is best," rejoined my aunt Alpina, " to see things as they really are ; no disappointment is so poignant as that which is preceded by unjustified hope. But we must no longer detain Bertha. Come, one embrace, my child, and then go,—go where duty calls you. Bless you," they both cried fervently. I could not speak, for I was moved to the soul. The " go where

duty calls you," sounded painfully to me. I felt that my principal duty commanded my stay, and that I was committing a species of deception, in thus misapplying the term, or appropriating it to myself. I could not utter a farewell; but I was pressed in their arms; I returned their pressure, and tears of genuine anguish bedewed their dear and honoured countenances. I moved hastily away, and with hurried step descended the staircase. At the bottom I stopped a moment to gaze at a clock, as if it had been a thing of life. It struck nine. I counted the hour, and wondered how it would be with me when next I heard it. I met Jean Francois at the door. I took his arm in silence, and for the first mile I continued to weep even to sobbing. But gradually the animation of exercise, the bracing air of a bright frosty morning, insensibly lulled me to forgetfulness; and by the time I reached Manvert, the pleasurable sensation of change, so dear to youth, dispelled the melancholy I had endured at leaving Alpina. But when I saw Esther, pale and almost lifeless, lifted into the carriage,



I relapsed into sadness. As we passed the church-yard, she made an effort to look out of the window, and remained sometime intently gazing at it, and her eyes assumed that fatal lustre, which, like the last beams of an expiring lamp, sent forth unwonted brilliancy. She pressed her hand in mine, saying, “There, lay me there, Bertha, remember.” There was in her manner so much earnest calmness, so much solemnity, that I had no power to evade or to misunderstand her behest. I bowed my head in silence,—again my tears flowed, and again I resolved that this journey should indeed be one of duty, and not merely of sole pleasure.

“I gazed at every inanimate object, I traced and retraced its form. Such will it be, I said mentally, when I see it again, but shall I be the same? My heart fluttered at the question, and I knew not what to hope or think. I closed my eyes, and endeavoured to shut out reflection. As we travelled slowly along the side of the crescent lake, the jingling of the bells of our voiturier horses,—their slow pace,—the smoothness of the road;—and the gentle ripple of the

water, as it died away upon its pebbled shore, all conspired to render my endeavours not ineffectual. At Fort l'Ecluse, the romantic scenery again awakened me to enjoyment ; and the blue waters of the Rhone, rushing brightly along, afforded that food to fancy, which is so peculiarly the characteristic of flowing streams.

“ The picturesque village of St Germain, but more than that, the small still lake of Syant, the green transparency of whose waters, green, as the waters of the Rhone are cerulean,—the gloomy valley in which it is inclosed,—the brushwood that clothes its mountains,—the dark fir that owns no change of colouring from the seasons,—mingled with the vivid dyes of autumn,—the mountains flinging their pathless shadows as the evening closes, were objects that produced on me a delicious pensiveness, which was not interrupted by any contradictory circumstances.

“ After passing the ruins of the Castle of St Alban, there is little else of striking feature to engage the attention till we reached Lyons. The feeble state of Esther's health made it ad-

visible that we should prosecute our journey by water, and the extreme beauty of the scenery amply repays the inconvenience of this mode of travelling, although, perhaps, not so the danger attendant on very insufficient barks, and still more insufficient boatmen. At Vienne we stopped for the night, and having seen Esther arranged as comfortably as the very incommodious inn admitted of, I proceeded to wander about the vine-covered mountains. The ruins of the ancient forts and castles—the majestic windings of the Rhone, which here assumes a totally different aspect, and inspires with other feelings from those which it conveys when first rushing in limpid purity from its source, amused and delighted me. I enjoyed every thing with all that freshness of feeling which being new to life and its various scenes afford.

“ At every turn of the river, as we proceeded on our journey, a novel aspect of country presented itself to my admiring gaze. And when I first beheld the walls of Avignon, a thousand recollections of Petrarch and Laura fancifully intermingled themselves with my dreaming

thoughts; and as I gazed on the scene I repeated some of those beautiful compositions, of which it amused me to attempt making translations.

## TRANSLATION OF PETRARCH. SONNET CXXXI.

“ Gli occhi di chio parlai sì caldamente.”

THE eyes I warmly sung of heavenly ray—  
The arms, the hands, the feet, the face,  
That made me different from the common race,  
And stole me from myself away ;  
The crisped hair of brilliant gold—  
The lightning of th’ angelic smile,  
Which made of Earth a Heaven the while,  
Are now a little senseless mould,  
And I still live ! Hence this sad dole—  
Without that light that lit my soul,  
A shatter’d bark ’tis left to roll :  
For ever ends my amorous strain,  
Exhausted in its wonted vein,  
And all my lyre is tears of pain.

No, Petrarch, no—the spirit of thy lines  
’Tis vain to imitate with other sound  
Than that which on thy native lyre is found—  
Sound which, e’en love, ennobles and refines.  
Thy subtle essence, exquisitely sweet,  
Eludes the grasp of any ruder hand ;  
Th’ obedient spirit came at thy command,

But vainly I its heavenly harpings greet  
' Enough for me, if o'er each thrilling nerve  
I feel the potent magic of thy verse,  
And the high-throbbing of my heart may serve  
To taste the charm I never can rehearse.  
So o'er the wave we chase the glittering light,  
Which still eludes the touch, but charms the sight.

“ It was a great disappointment to me not to go to Vaucluse ; but I remembered that I came to soothe the pains of illness, not to luxuriate in fanciful imaginations. After leaving Avignon I was not struck with the appearance of the country, till we came to Orques, a small romantic village, where the low rocks are covered with thyme and lavender; and other odoriferous herbs, and where the olive, for the first time, met my eye. There is a Scriptural classic in the olive which renders it interesting ; and much of delicacy in the fine tracery of its light, pale, foliage, as well as in its chiselled bark. But by many these characteristics are neither understood or tasted. I loitered long enjoying the peculiar features of the scenery, which gave me back the reality of certain old prints I had rescued from a dusty corner of my aunt's room,

and which, like faithful translations,—though still translations,—had made me capable of feeling and understanding the beauties of the original, now that I read those beauties for the first time in their own language.

“ There was a deep blue tint on the broken line of the mountains that bounded the horizon. The grand irregular bed of the Durance, which, in its unruly course, cast wide the different tracts it had capriciously chosen and left; a rocky foreground—the streaky sky of green and gold, which in painting would have appeared gaudy and artificial,—these were the details which formed a whole that, after all, cannot be rightly conceived from such a parcelled out description. My delight went on increasing as we travelled farther south. The different productions of the earth in this happy climate from those I usually had seen—the sight of flowers and shrubs, cultivated with care in our gardens, here flaunting profusely in all the luxuriance of nature, was a never-failing source of amusement to me; while the greater features of the land-

scapes, elevated my mind to all I had ever dreamed of in my dreaming hours.

“ At Frejus I went to the ruins of the amphitheatre. It is a beautiful building ; but I shuddered at the idea of the purposes to which it had been destined ; and as I passed the arena, with all its sanguinary feats, I sickened at the cruelty and vice of humanity which could thus dedicate magnificence and beauty to the degrading purposes of ferocious and brutal sport. How gladly did I raise my eyes to the mouldering walls, where I beheld the wild fig laden with fruit, offering the bounty of nature in the still silence of peace, and where no sound met my listening ear, but the casual song of a bird, or the joyous laugh of some children playing among the ruins. How did I rejoice that they were ruins !

“ On leaving Frejus, there is much hilly road. With what elation of spirit did I feel that I had trod the maritime Alps. The sun was setting, and covered that side of the heavens in one expanse of beaming glory. The sea was in sight to our left ; over the mountain tops, that new world, which I gazed at for the first time. And

around us arose on all sides that sea of hills which bears a faithful resemblance to the waves of the ocean. These hills are chiefly covered with wood, excepting those which skirted the horizon to the left, and these were bold and rugged. The trees were mostly pines, but such pines!—so verdant, so richly feathered, so rejoicing in their existence, it conveyed a sort of reflective happiness to gaze upon them. Below these Alpine monarchs grew in humbler but not less beautiful guise, the myrtle covered with its modest berries, innumerable kinds of flowering shrubs, whose names to me were all unknown, but not unprized, because I could not class them in all the dignity of botanical science. How I enjoyed them! how my delighted eyes wandered over their colours, as if they had been gifted with intelligence to receive the homage!

“ In descending to the shore on which Nice is situated, a still more smiling scene lay spread out before me. The brilliant atmosphere, the increase of cultivation, the glowing orange, the whiteness of the innumerable buildings scattered all around, every gay charm of na-



ture seemed to welcome the arrival of the traveller; but, alas! as all things fade by use, and change their appearance on intimate and long acquaintance, this paradise faded and changed like the rest. The apparently thickly inhabited country proved on near inspection to be deserted, and the thousand villas are, when thus examined, mere shadows of a substance, dirty dilapidated places, the abodes of wretched poverty and filth.

“ Nice itself is the crowded resort of spectres, persons who come in the last stage of mortal disease, expecting miracles from the climate. This resort of suffering conveys a dejection, which no outward brilliancy of sun and climate can wholly dissipate; and I felt the effect of this more keenly, from the interest I took in watching over my own loved Esther.

“ In every place in which I have as yet ever been resident, I have always singled out some favourite path, some chosen spot, of which I have made, as it were, a friend. I have trod on the same way till I fancied it knew and welcomed my footsteps. I have gazed at the same

scene, till I believed it imbued with the spirits of my thoughts. Nor was this pleasure wanting at Nice. In following the shore, past the port on the left hand, there is an irregular path that winds through an olive wood, and past some rocks up a steep mountain, whose brushwood is arbutus and myrtle. I fancied this to resemble the Promontory of Leucate; I christened it by that name; and the waves seemed to bound lighter at my feet, as I flung the myrtle bough I gathered, an offering to the shrine at which she sacrificed—She——Well, what is the name?

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE sea lay like a glass outspread  
So quietly, so measured,  
The gentle ripple of the tide  
Laved the ocean's rocky side ;  
Blue was the cloudless vault of Heaven,  
Save where the last bright tints of even,  
In one broad blaze of golden light,  
Dazzled the fascinating sight,  
Till the dimmed eye cast down to muse,  
Dropt <sup>fall</sup> ringlets like the Iris hues  
Of gaudy peacock's sweeping train,  
And closed their lids to see again.  
When next they cast their glance around,  
They rested on the rich red ground,  
Which 'neath the olive's doubtful green,  
Made classic feature in the scene ;  
Thence wandering to the horizon's bound,  
The conic hills, their crescent mound,  
In grand fantastic shapes they rise,  
And mixing melt into the skies.

“ It was on such an evening, that, walking slowly by Esther, while my vagrant fancy reverted to the past, I spoke abruptly, or rather thought aloud, “ Tell me, dearest cousin, what you meant exactly by cautioning me against Sophie de Féronce ?” Esther looked earnestly at me ; “ I shall reply to your question, when you have first replied to one which I wish you to answer without disguise or reserve. It has appeared to me, that a tacit agreement existed between us, never to enter upon that topic more,—have you gained sufficient composure to do so without endangering your peace ? If you answer me in the affirmative, I will readily satisfy your curiosity.”

“ How often we misjudge others ;—how often we misjudge ourselves. I did reply in the affirmative. Esther believed me, for my mien was calm, but at my heart there was tumultuous anarchy.

“ “ My reason, then,” continued Esther, after a moment’s pause, “ for bidding you beware of Mademoiselle de Féronce was simply this,—I saw that she was an insincere character ; I

knew that she entertained a passion for the Marchese, and I had reason to think that they were well acquainted previous to their meeting at your aunts. As Mademoiselle de Féronce continued to meet the Marchese at undue hours, and fearful that I should at length be obliged to inform my father of her imprudent conduct, to call it by no harsher name, I attempted once to expostulate with, and tell her to avoid such behaviour in future. The manner in which she received this gentle reproof, the impudence with which she denied facts that had fallen under my own cognizance, convinced me there were no good qualities in her composition to redeem the error of youthful indiscretion, and I conceived myself bound, from my affection to you, to put you on your guard against a woman, whose character seemed so likely to gain a fatal ascendancy over yours. I almost feared, dear Bertha, that my caution came too late." "No, dearest Esther, not so," I replied quickly; "I have too much pride of nature not to scorn those who would deceive me, and too much gratitude towards you, not to acknowledge that

you have saved me——perhaps——much shame and sorrow.” I was sincere while I was speaking, but this conversation, as my cousin had but too justly feared, awoke the whole train of fanciful images, which had lain concealed, but were not changed, at the moment I believed I could for ever have cast them from my heart ; but, alas ! I could only alter, I could not obliterate—I could not believe the Marchese guilty of cold-blooded perfidy ; but I believed he had got entangled in the snares of an artful woman, who had rendered him unjust to me.

“ Winter passed away unhooded, indeed scarcely felt, and only known by the tops of the distant mountains being covered with snow. In March spring had made rapid advances, and the various-coloured anemony, Narcissus, and the violet, covered every bank, and cost the husbandmen no little pains to discard from the cultured ground. But, amid this perfumed flowery world, death still was busy, and the various spectre-forms who had dragged their existence through the previous months, now found the balmy atmosphere a signal of departure to them, and

one by one the languid steps we had seen tottering along the sheltered wall, we beheld no more.—It is indescribably melancholy to feel the contrast of a gay and blooming creation awakening to new life, and to behold the wreck of frail mortality amid the bloom. I could escape from this, by wandering at a distance over the mountains ; but poor Esther could not take her usual airings, without witnessing the sad effects of the change of the season, and, although life had not much of charm for her, nature made her shrink from witnessing its decay.

“The Banneret immediately thought of change of scene, and finding one day some traders’ vessels bound for Genoa, one of them with tolerable accommodations, he determined that we should remove thither. He preferred this mode of conveyance to a felucca, which he thought more likely to fatigue from the disembarkation which takes place every night ; and going by land was out of the question for a person unable to bear fatigue.

“ We set sail with a fair wind. I sat on deck watching the sun sink into the ocean, and night

gradually came on. An innumerable host of stars appeared. I delighted in observing their tremulous light drawn out to lengthened gleams dancing along the waves. I resembled them to remembered moments of happiness—the star itself far away, but its light increased by distance. Oh ! imagination, dangerous, enchanting faculty, why do ye prey upon the existence you adorn ?—With all these excitements to fancy came back my visionary world, and the image of that being who stood foremost amid the shadowy crew.

“ Genoa was ill calculated to subdue in me those faults of character which I could deplore, but had not the strength to amend. If ever there was a scene of enchantment, formed to ensnare the senses, it is Genoa;—Genoa seen in early spring, while yet the flowers are in their bloom, and the sun has not burnt their sweetness with too scorching a ray. Its bay, its circling palaces, and fairy buildings, rising in amphitheatre on the mountain, and intermingled with terraces, and fountains, and pyramidal cypress, its———This is common-place and vain,



for is there a name for that vāgrānt and etherial charm which dwells in the verry air, and from the sultry hour of mid-day to the fresh cool time of moonlight, mingles with every breath that is respired, pervades every object that meets the eye, and is wafted from every blossom?

“My cousin Esther even revived for a time, and nothing but joyousness breathed around.

“We had been at Genoa about a fortnight, when we were invited by a lady of our acquaintance to be present at the performance of one of Racine’s tragedies, which was to be acted by some persons of her society. I accepted the invitation with delight, and, never having witnessed any scenic representation, save some that had been acted in a barn by miserable strolling actors, I felt a species of curiosity and impatience for the promised entertainment, very unlike any sentiments which those habituated to such amusements can conceive. When the piece commenced, my whole attention was fixed upon the stage. It was not to me a beautiful fiction;—it was, for the time, a reality, a thing in which every passion of my soul became

deeply interested. The woes of Berenice seemed my own woes ; and Titus became the lover of my imagination. As love or glory ruled the hour in the breast of these characters, mine echoed a responsive feeling ; and when in the last scene Berenice pronounced the words,

“ Sur Titus et sur moi reglez votre conduite,  
Je l’aime, je le suis, Titus m’aime, il me quitte,”

my conscience satisfied me with the assurance, that I too, in similar circumstances, should act a similar part ; allowed me to give an unchecked admiration to the melting character, and I wept delicious tears.

“ As soon as the tragedy was ended, all the spectators pressed around the actors and actresses, to applaud, and to express their admiration of the performance. I only, of all present, remained, as it were, transfixed to my place. I dreaded to break the enchantment in which I was plunged ; I dreaded to see personages with whom I had identified my highest feelings, descend to their own uninteresting individuality.

“ The buz of commendation, the envious whisperings of criticism, were alike distasteful to

me. I joyed to feel, but I could not bear to think ; and calling to Jean Francois, who, to do him justice, was ever ready at my call, I told him I must instantly go home.

“ The night was dark, but fine ; and the pleasant liberty, which is customary in Genoa, of having no carriage, afforded me an unquestioned power to indulge my predilection for an evening walk. Our house was situated on the farther side of the town, beyond the gates, and in the course of the way, the moon suddenly breaking through clouds, irradiated the whole bay. I stopped to gaze at the beauty of the scene, and as I did so, those lines recurred to me,

*J'ai fait de mon courage un epreuve dernière,  
Tu viens de rappeler ma raison toute entière,  
Jamais je ne me suis sentie plus amoureuse,  
Il faut d'autres efforts pour rompre tant de noeuds.*

“ It is worth while to stop for hours to hear such gentle words,” said my companion ; “ if I could only hope they were addressed to me. But I fear you are but reciting some of the play.” “ In fact,” I quietly replied, “ you are right ; — those words, if you recollect, are spoken by Antio-

thus." Jean Francois only sighed, and we were about to continue our way, when the figure of a man, wrapped in a cloak, and leaning against a parapet of the wall that was built out upon the rocks on the sea-shore, caught my attention. At first, I thought it was some one like myself, engaged in contemplating the waves as they silently succeeded each other, till rising against their native barrier, they climbed in idle haste, and broke against the rock. But when I looked again, I thought my senses deceived me, or I saw indeed that figure, which, once beheld, could not be forgotten ;—it was the Marchese. Surprise and joy overcame me ; no idea occurred to me, except that it was he I saw, he whom I had never expected to see again. I sprung forward, uttering some broken phrase of welcome, but he was hardly able to reply ; the faint sound of his voice, the expression of pain which accompanied the motion he made to extend his hand towards me, all conspired to terrify me. "What is the matter ?" I exclaimed ; "Are you ill ?" "Not ill—but wounded ; some villains attacked me, and as I was unarmed, would probably have

murdered me, had they not heard voices which made them fly." "Wounded! you are wounded, where? how?—Jean Francois, run for assistance, it is not far to our door." "Willingly, Mademoiselle, but I cannot leave you here alone at this time of night; we will both run home, and I am certain the Marchese will not be afraid to be left alone." "Obey me," I cried impatiently; "obey me, I conjure you; do not attempt to make me leave him in such a moment as this; run, I entreat you. Send for a surgeon, and come with some one here quickly." "Yes—no," stammered the doubting Jean Francois; at length he said, "I will obey you." I was left alone with the man who had first excited in me all the romance of passion; after believing myself separated from him for ever, I found myself as if by magic placed by his side, under circumstances the most strange and interesting. When the sound of the footsteps of Jean Francois died away, there was nothing to break the silence of the night; the Marchese did not speak, and I stood mutely by his side, wishing to proffer aid, and not knowing in what manner to do so. "I

fear you are hurt, dangerously hurt," at length I said. "Not so, I hope; be not alarmed, it is only in my shoulder that I am wounded." The hour, the circumstance, the silence, inspired me with a tremor which thrilled through every vein, and yet my heart throbbed with a fearful joy. Thus passed the moments of Jean Francois' absence. He returned, and with him came two or three domestics. "Where shall the Marchese be borne?" said Jean Francois. "Here is a chair to convey him to his house." "To the Strada Balbi," he replied, thanking him. "Our house is much nearer," I said with anxiety; "carry him there." My orders were obeyed, and thither he was conveyed.

"The wound proved not of a dangerous nature; but loss of blood had made him faint. In a few hours he was able to be carried home; but the Banneret, taken unawares, gave way to the impulse of good nature, and besought him to remain till he should be quite recovered.

"The next day, the first thing the Banneret thought of was pursuing the perpetrators of the deed. Had the Marchese any suspicion who

they could be? Could he afford him any clue to trace them out? The Marchese in vain assured him, that it would be useless to make researches after them, as they had, very likely, taken to their boats, and gone down the coast. He added, as if recollecting himself, "Besides, I was probably mistaken for some other person, and, very likely, those who attacked me did not intend me any personal wrong. At all events, what satisfaction would it be to me to see them in chains at the galleys?" The Banneret expatiated loudly upon the negligence of the police, and said, he thought these things had been better attended to at Genoa. Nay, he was sure when he had explained and made known the business, he should find redress; at all events, that he had been too long a magistrate himself not to feel, that it was the duty of every individual to search out and punish delinquents, and that he was determined to do every thing in his power to procure all possible and satisfactory intelligence concerning this business. And, having thus spoken, he hastily set off upon the errand he had undertaken, delighted to have

found some incident on which to employ his time and energies.

“The Marchese departed to his own house, after a thousand expressions of gratitude, and looking more than he even expressed. Esther and I were left to exhaust our fancy in conjectures; and the mysterious circumstances, with which the Marchese was ever surrounded, again afforded to my imagination a busy field in which to expatiate.

“Alone in my apartment, I could not escape from reflection—I knew the effects likely to ensue from a renewal of intimacy with this person. My reason told me, that I ought to avoid all intercourse with one so dangerous to my peace;—one, concerning whose real situation and character every one seemed ignorant; and who had, to me in particular, shown himself in so very doubtful and capricious a light, that I could not conceal from myself, that every consideration forbade my yielding to the powerful attraction which drew me towards him. I acknowledged the truth of what my reason suggested, but did I act up to its dictates? No!



the effort was too painful, and, suffering myself to float on the current of accident, I trusted to time and chance to decide the issue of the event.

“A few days after that on which I had unfortunately met the man, who had, in fact, never been wholly absent from my remembrance, as Esther and I were conversing upon the subject, or rather as Esther was conversing with a gentle but unpersuasive reasoning, and I was dreaming in a vague, unsatisfactory mood, the object of our discussion entered the apartment; a movement of surprise on Esther’s part, on mine of joy and tremor, made us both advance to meet him. “Are you so soon able to come out?” said my cousin. “I am scarcely able, perhaps,” he answered, “but so willing, that here I am, to thank you for your care of me, to express, in part, my joy, my comfort, at meeting you again, and to assure you, I think the accident which befel me fortunate, since it has again thrown me upon your compassionate interest.” He uttered these words in that undisguised and natural manner which only occasionally broke forth, and

rendered him, at such times, irresistibly interesting. In the course of an hour or two that he remained with us, addressing one language to Esther, and another more silent, but not less eloquent, to me, my cousin became the slave of that indescribable charm with which nature had endowed him. In adverting to the accident of his wound, he observed, "That at first he had imagined himself mistaken for some other person, on whom jealousy, or revenge for some injury, had thus gratified itself; but now, he thought it more probable, that, as he came from a billiard-table, where he had been successful, that he was attacked for his money." "And did they rob you?" I said. "Oh," he replied, colouring, "my resistance prevented that, and your approach, fortunately for me, terrified the assassins from rifling me." At this moment the Banneret joined us, exclaiming, in a voice of triumph, "He is found! He is found!" "Who is found?" we all uttered, "The man who stilettoed you, to be sure," addressing the Marchese; the latter coloured violently, but affecting to smile, he replied, with an incredulous air, "No-

thing is more unlikely than that he should be found; in Italy these things are better managed, and no one thinks much about so common an occurrence." "Oh, but I assure you," said the Banneret impatiently, "that this time we have got hold of the assassin, for the man that is now taken up, was traced, and there was found upon him, as I am told, a handkerchief, which your servant Antonio said he would swear to being your property." "Idiot," cried the Marchese, apparently off his guard. "Yes, it was very ideotical indeed," rejoined the Banneret, "but people who commit crimes are always discovered by similar trifles." The Marchese's countenance changed, and he seemed to advert in thought to some painful occurrence. "Well," continued the Banneret, intent only upon his own consequence and amusement; "You need not look so gloomy, for you have got cheaply off, and will have ample scope for revenge, as the villain is now in custody and is, I understand, to be confronted with you to-morrow."

"This is an unfortunate affair," replied the other. "I would not willingly take any man's

life. You have placed me in a most unpleasant predicament; for, should I unluckily recognise him, what can I do? Oh no; not willingly would I be the occasion of the death of any mortal. Had I, indeed, in the heat of passion, been so unfortunate—but coolly, or on a bare suspicion, to swear away the life of another—of another,” he repeated, rising, and walking about in much perturbation. “Generous!” ejaculated Esther, in a low voice, while the tear stood trembling in her eye. I cast a look of delight and triumph at her. The Banneret stared at us all three alternately with looks of impatience, and shrugging up his shoulders, said with a contemptuous smile, “I am lost in all your incomprehensible, unnatural sublimity of feeling. Here is a person of our acquaintance stabbed by a murderer, for it is no thanks to him that he did not prove such, and here is the man, who, after narrowly escaping with his life, talks of regret at the discovery of the assassin, and two silly women admiring him for his folly. Pardon me, ladies and gentleman, if all this is much too sublime for me. Be it as it may,” (and here he drew up in

consequential self-satisfaction,) "be it as it may, however little my pains are rewarded, I have done my duty; and being satisfied the delinquent will in all probability suffer for his crime, I am quite contented. To-morrow you will be called upon, Signor Marchese, to swear to this man's identity." Having thus spoken, and rather sneeringly, he walked up and down the room, apparently delighted; for whatever incident caused a bustle, he was equally charmed, provided he was an actor in the scene. As soon as Esther and myself were left to discuss this affair, she confessed that she never before had been so pleased with the Marchese. "There is so much humanity in his apprehension lest he should detect the person that injures him, that I cannot but admire so noble a feature of character."

"I said nothing, but I did not feel the less. The next day we waited anxiously to hear the result of the examination of the suspected person; and when the Bannet entered, we flew to him. But in an instant I feared some dreadful occurrence had taken place; for he laid down

his hat and walking-cane, with an air of disappointment and despair, and crossing his hands together, as he was wont in moments of despondency, "There," he said,—“it is all over.” “What is over? I implore you do not keep us in this suspense.” “Why,” he said, with an oath, and jumping up, “would you believe it? No sooner did the Marchese and the prisoner behold each other, than they rushed into one another’s arms. And who do you think this dear friend was?—Why, no other than that assassin-looking man who came to Lausanne. But they may embrace and shake hands as much as they choose, I never will believe but that that fellow is a robber or a captain of banditti. I will tell you what I would have done. I would have clapped them both in irons till I knew more of their history,—that is what I would. No, no, Mr Carlovitz, (as I think they call him;) nothing shall ever persuade me you are not a rascal; not all the assurances that the handkerchief was a pledge of friendship, and all the rest of the shows and tricks that they both played, because it suited their purpose.” His purpose I

willingly subscribed to in my own mind ; but the Marchese's purpose—I disdained such a thought. “ Well,” replied my cousin, “ but how will all this end ?”—“ End ?” replied her father, “ why, just as it began, in doubt and mystery, to be sure, and no one be a jot the wiser. So my trouble has gone for nothing, and there is nothing more to be done, for all inquiry after the perpetrators of the crime is at an end. One thing I advise you is, to have nothing more to do with any of them till I can find out how far it is proper for you to associate with such a person or not.” I was afraid it would come to this, and I would willingly have purchased the pleasure I felt in seeing the Marchese with the chance of all the evils which it might entail.

“ Scarcely was this conversation ended, when the Marchese entered, confirming the first part of the intelligence that the Banneret had just given us ; then added, attempting to smile, but it was a smile of painful solicitude, rather than of pleasure, “ My friend Carlovitz has an unfortunate appearance, which, together with his unpolished manners, prepossess people against him.”

I made no answer, for I would not say what I did not think, and I could not say what I did. Esther too was silent; and there was a painful pause, which the Banneret at length interrupted. "I'll tell you what, my good Marchese, that man has more the air of an assassin than any thing else; but as your friend, and trusting that you will let me into your secret at last, for you have seen enough of me to know that I am a man to be trusted, I am willing to try and forget the impression his figure has made upon me. And if you choose, I will not refuse to become acquainted with him." "A thousand thanks," rejoined the Marchese eagerly; "you do me infinite pleasure." Then checking the earnestness with which he had spoken, he continued carelessly, "You must be aware, that, after the imputation my friend has undergone on my account, I must be doubly anxious to wipe off the idle suspicions which might attach to him; and nothing can do this so effectually as the countenance and protection of persons of respectability." "Why, to be sure," said the Banneret, "as I have been in some degree the cause



of this unlucky mistake, so would I remedy it in as much as lies in my power."

"During this conversation the Marchese was considerably agitated; but having again thanked the Banneret, hastened away as if fearful it might take some other turn less favourable to his wishes.

"This man Carlovitz was introduced to us. I could not avoid shuddering whenever he came near me, but we did not long suffer from the presence of this disagreeable intruder, for he shortly after left Genoa, and the affair of the assassin being soon forgotten, the whole business sunk into oblivion.

END OF VOL. I.





